OCT. 17

10¢

Exciting Mysteries

DETECTIVE

FIC WEEKLY

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RANKLIN
ARTIN

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SEVEN FACES

A Sensational Mystery Novel by

MAX BRAND

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This Revelation Will Startle

MEN PAST 40!

But It May Bring Years of Comfort to Their Lives!

HAVE you lost much of your strength? Do you suffer from pains in back and elsewhere? Are you forced to get up 2 to 10 times at night? Are you a victim of nervousness, fatigue, dizziness, chronic constipation, sciatica, so-called bladder weakness? Many men past 40 often mistake these ailments for symptoms of approaching old age. They undergo prolonged treatments that frequently bring no relief, because they have failed to strike at the real trouble.

Science has found that these ailments in men past 40 are often due to prostate Gland congestion or enlargement. This tiny gland becomes swollen and fails to function. Unless corrected it will likely grow worse. The result is often wretched old age or perhaps grave surgery.

What This Treatment Really Means

Science has now perfected an amazing home treatment used and endorsed by physicians and sanitariums. It goes directly to the area of the prostate gland, relieving congestion, increasing circulation, toning and stimulating. Many users report relief almost over night. Others say they actually felt 10 years younger in 7 days. Not a drug—medicine—massage—diet—violet ray—or exercise. It is a natural method.

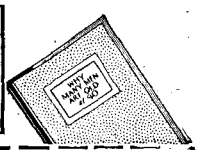
100,000 Men Have Found the Answer

They have been shown the secret of better health and strength in keeping this tiny vital prostate gland active at the period in many men's lives when it becomes congested or inflamed.

FREE If You Act Now!

The results of this new method are so startling that the manufacturer will let you test it on 7 days' Free Trial. If it doesn't bring immediate relief—if it doesn't make you feel 10 years younger in 7 days—it will cost you nothing. Mail the coupon for details and Free copy of "Why Many Men Are Old at 40."

If you live west of the Rockies, address The Electro Thermal Co., 500 Wm. Fox Building, Dept. 30-P, Los Angeles, Calif. In Canada, address the Electro Thermal Co., Desk 30-P, 53 Yonge St., Toronto, Canada.



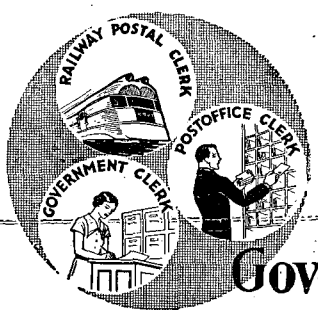
W. J. KIRK, President,
The Electro Thermal Co.,
3007 Morris Ave., Steubenville, Ohio.

Send details of Free Trial and Free Copy of "Why Many Men Are Old at 40." No cost or obligation.

Name .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....



GET A Government JOB

START $1260 to $2100 YEAR MEN—WOMEN

Experience usually not needed. Common education usually sufficient. Mail Coupon immediately—sure.

COUPON

Franklin Institute
Dept. N254
Rochester, N. Y.

Gentlemen: Rush to me, FREE of charge, list of U. S. Government big pay jobs obtainable. Send FREE 32-page book describing salaries, vacations, hours, work, etc. Tell me how to get one of these jobs.

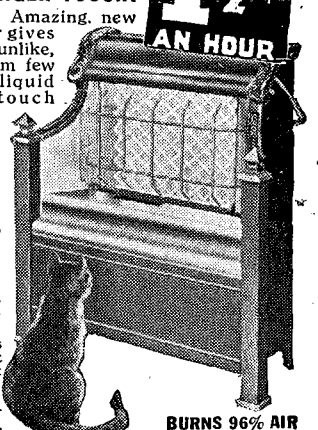
Name .....

Address .....

Solid HEATING COMFORT FOR ONLY 1½¢ AN HOUR

USE NEW RADIANT ANYWHERE IN HOUSE... CLEAN, QUICK HEAT-AT-A-FINGER-TOUCH!

Nothing like it! Amazing, new Radiant heater gives many hours of sunlike, healthy heat from few pints of cheap liquid fuel. Finger-touch heat regulation. Instant operation. Heats every corner of a big room even in zero weather!



REPLACES STOVES...COST LESS TO USE!

Why fuss with dirty stoves, coal or wood, tangling cord or tube heaters when this beautiful Radiant gives you more heat for less money, needs no bulky fuel, leaves no dirt or ashes, is portable, and can be used anywhere.

BURNS 96% AIR ONLY 4% FUEL!

30-DAY HOME TRIAL IF YOU ACT NOW!

On our special introductory offer, you can get the new Radiant for 30 days, to know why thousands of owners praise its remarkable heating efficiency and economy. The special low price amazes all! Write TODAY for full details!

AGENTS! A great money-maker, full or spare time, with everything supplied. But you *must* write at once!

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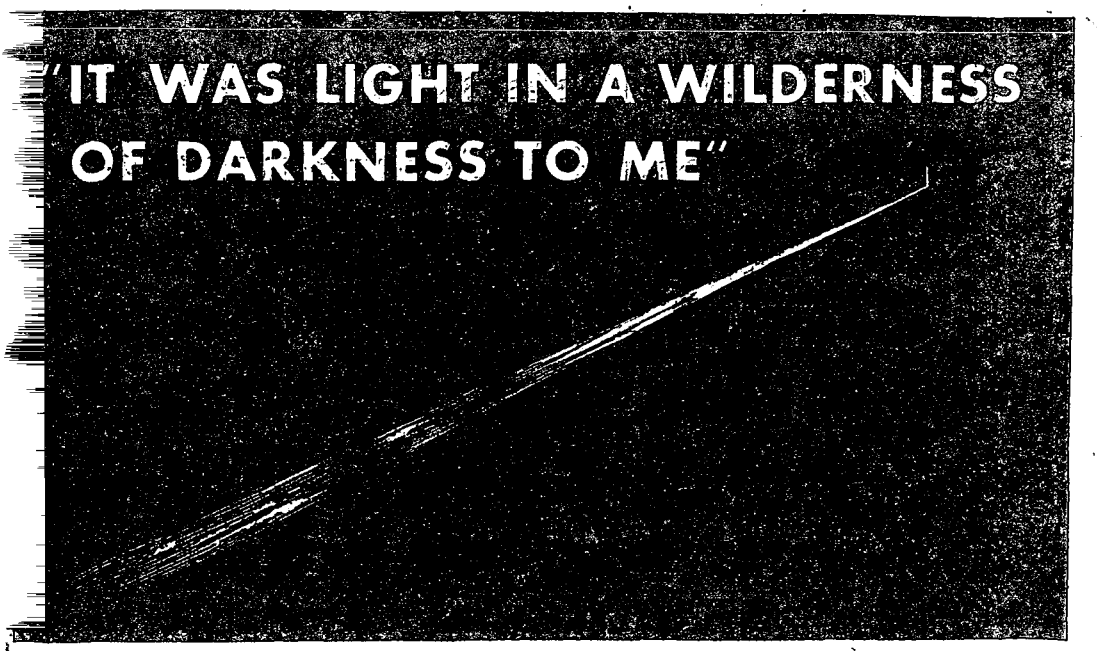

"I WAS STUCK. A wife and three kiddies—and the same old pay envelope. I couldn't see a thing ahead except the same old grind. Then one day I read an I. C. S. ad. The coupon fascinated me. A new idea struck me—it was a light in a wilderness of darkness to me! Today, because I mailed that coupon two years ago, I am a trained man—making a trained man's pay!"

Does this suggest something to you? Then mail the coupon today!

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- ☐ Building Estimating
- ☐ Contractor and Builder
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- ☐ Electrical Engineer
- ☐ Electric Lighting
- ☐ Welding, Electric and Gas
- ☐ Reading Shop Blueprints
- ☐ Boilermaker
- ☐ Heat Treatment of Metals
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- ☐ Telegraph Engineer
- ☐ Telephone Work ☐ Radio
- ☐ Mechanical Engineering
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- ☐ Machinist ☐ Toolmaker
- ☐ Patternmaker
- ☐ Diesel Engines
- ☐ Aviation Engines
- ☐ Automobile Mechanic
- ☐ Refrigeration
- ☐ Plumbing ☐ Steam Fitting
- ☐ Heating ☐ Ventilation
- ☐ Air Conditioning
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- ☐ Marine Engineer
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- ☐ R. R. Section Foreman
- ☐ Air Brakes ☐ R. R. Signalmen
- ☐ Highway Engineering
- ☐ Civil Engineering
- ☐ Surveying and Mapping
- ☐ Bridge Engineer
- ☐ Bridge and Building Foreman
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- ☐ Illustrating
- ☐ Cartooning
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Name..... Age..... Address.....

City..... State..... Present Position.....

If you reside in Canada, send this coupon to the International Correspondence Schools Canadian, Limited, Montreal, Canada

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DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

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Formerly FLYNN'S

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The Magazine With the Detective Shield on the Cover Is On Sale Every Wednesday

THE RED STAR NEWS COMPANY — 280 BROADWAY, NEW YORK, N. Y.

WILLIAM T. DEWART, President — THEODORE PROEHL, Treasurer

MESSAGERIES HACHETTE — PARIS: HACHETTE & CIE.

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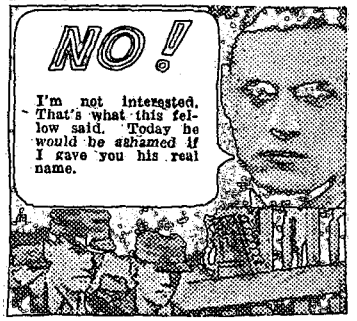
Read what happened to these two men when I said:



I will Train You at Home in Spare Time for a GOOD JOB IN RADIO

These two fellows had the same chance. Each clipped and sent me a coupon, like the one in this ad. They got my book on Radio's opportunities, S. J. Ebert, 104-B Quadrangle, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, saw that Radio offered him a real chance. He enrolled. The other fellow, whom we will call John Doe, wrote that he wasn't interested. He was just one of those fellows who wants a better job, better pay, but never does anything about it. One of the many who spend their lives in a low-pay, no-future job, because they haven't the ambition, the determination, the action it takes to succeed.

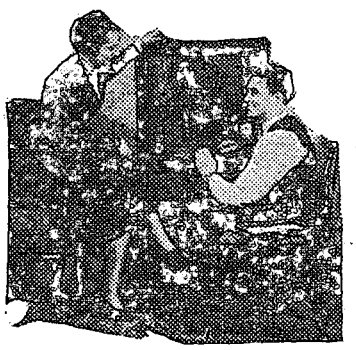
But read what S. J. Ebert wrote me and remember that John Doe had the same chance: "Upon graduation I accepted a job as serviceman, and within three weeks was made Service Manager. This job paid me $40 to $50 a week compared with $18 I earned in a shoe factory before. Eight months later I went with station KWCR as operator. From there I went to KTNT. Now I am Radio Engineer with WSUI. I certainly recommend the N. R. I. to all interested in the greatest field of all, Radio."

"I WANT TO HELP YOU. If you are earning less than $30 a week I believe I can raise your pay. However, I will let you decide that. Let me show you what I have done for others, what I am prepared to do for you. Get my book, read it over, and decide one way or another."

J. E. Smith

Get Ready for Jobs Like These. Many Radio Experts Make $30, $50, $75 a Week

Do you want to make more money? Broadcasting stations employ engineers, operators, station managers and pay up to $5,000 a year. Spare time Radio set servicing pays as much as $200 to $500 a year—full time Radio servicing jobs pay as much as $30, $50, $75 a week. Many Radio Experts own their own full time or part time Radio businesses. Radio manufacturers and jobbers employ testers, inspectors, foremen, engineers, servicemen, paying up to $6,000 a year. Radio operators on ships get good pay and see the world besides. Automobile, police, aviation, commercial Radio and loud speaker systems offer good opportunities now and for the future. Television promises many good jobs soon. Men who have taken N. R. I. Training are holding good jobs in all these branches of Radio.



Many Make $5, $10, $15 a Week Extra in Spare Time While Learning

Practically every neighborhood needs a good spare time serviceman. The day you enroll I start sending you Extra Money Job Sheets. They show you how to do Radio repair jobs that you can cash in on quickly. Throughout your training I send you plans and ideas that have made good spare time money for hundreds of fellows. I send you special Radio equipment and show you how to conduct experiments and build circuits which illustrate important Radio principles. My training gives you valuable, practical experience, while learning.

Get My 64-Page Book Free

Mail the coupon now for "Rich Rewards in Radio." It's free to anyone over 16 years old. It describes Radio's spare time and full time opportunities and those coming in Television; tells about my Training for Radio and Television; shows you actual letters from men I have trained, telling what they are doing and earning; tells about my Money Back Agreement. MAIL THE COUPON in an envelope, or paste it on a penny postcard—NOW!

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute,
Dept. 6KK Washington, D. C.

MAIL THIS NOW

FOR FREE BOOK OF FACTS ABOUT RADIO

J. E. SMITH, President, National Radio Institute, Dept. 6KK, Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Smith: Without obligating me, send "Rich Rewards in Radio," which points out the spare time and full time opportunities in Radio and explains your 50-50 method of training men at home in spare time to become Radio Experts. (Please write plainly.)

Name ..... Age .....

Address .....

City ..... State .....

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29x4.50-20	1.85	.85
30x4.50-21	1.95	.85
28x4.75-19	1.85	.95
29x4.75-20	2.10	.95
28x5.00-19	2.25	1.05
30x5.00-20	2.40	1.05
5.25-17	2.45	1.15
29x5.25-18	2.45	1.15
29x5.25-19	2.45	1.15
30x5.25-20	2.50	1.15
31x5.25-21	2.60	1.15
5.50-17	2.75	1.15
28x5.50-18	2.75	1.15
29x5.50-19	2.75	1.15
6.00-17	2.85	1.15
30x6.00-18	2.85	1.15
31x6.00-19	2.85	1.15
32x6.00-20	2.95	1.25
33x6.00-21	3.10	1.25
32x6.50-20	3.20	1.35
6.00-18	3.15	1.45

TRUCK BALLOONS Size	Tires	Tubes
6.00-20	$3.10	$1.65
6.50-20	3.35	1.95
7.00-20	4.60	2.95
7.50-20	5.15	3.75

HEAVY DUTY TRUCK TIRES

Size	Tires	Tubes
30x5	$3.50	$1.95
32x6	6.95	2.75
34x7	6.95	3.25
38x7	9.45	3.95
36x8	9.65	3.95
40x8	11.60	4.15

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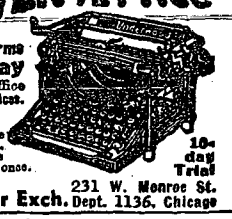

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Artificial Ear Drum

THE WAY COMPANY
726 Hofmann Bldg. Detroit, Michigan

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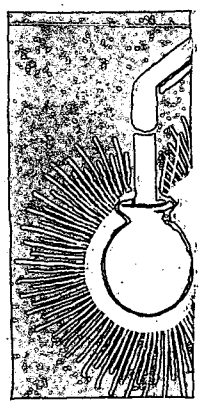
WONDER LIGHT!



A miraculous invention brings you new home lighting far better than electricity or old wick lamp at fraction of the cost. Fill your home with soft, brilliant, non-flickering white light for hours at few cents cost! Enjoy this amazing new light without the fuss of wicks to trim, chimneys to clean and break, or tangling cords or wires! Carry it anywhere: **HOME TRIAL** for 30 days at our risk before deciding. Your choice of beautiful art lamp models at direct-factory prices! WRITE TODAY!

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AKRON LAMP & MFG. CO.
510 Lamp Bldg. Akron, Ohio

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10¢ A DAY

BRAND NEW, latest model Remington Portable for only 10¢ a day! Amazingly low price direct from the factory. Every essential feature of large office typewriters—standard 4-row keyboard, standard width carriage, margin release, back space, automatic ribbon reverse. Act now. Remington Rand, Inc., Dept. 145-10, 315 Fourth Ave., New York, N. Y.

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A GOOD POSITION is ready for you upon completion of our simple, home-study course. We place you as Railway and Bus Passenger Traffic Inspector with salary up to $135 per month, to start, plus expenses, or refund tuition. Interesting, healthful (outdoor) work and rapid advancement for the ambitious; travel if you like. Free Booklet outlines our 17-year record of placing students. **STANDARD BUSINESS TRAINING INSTITUTE Buffalo, N. Y. Div. 5010**

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Stop Drink Habit

Just put tasteless Cravex in his coffee, tea, liquor or food. He won't know and soon his craving for whiskey, beer or wine should disappear. New, proven treatment—physician's prescription. Tones nerves—aids nature stop habit. Safe—doesn't upset stomach. Thousands benefited. Satisfaction guaranteed. Mailed postpaid in plain wrapper for $1.00. C.O.D. if desired, plus a few cents additional charge. Order today.

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Nervous Debility, Frequent Night Rising, Leg Pains, Lame Back, Lumbago, Sexual Weakness, Kidney and Bladder Trouble, Chronic Constipation; Despondency, Restlessness at Night are only some of the ailments; differing in individuals, that can often be ascribed to lesion of the Prostate Gland.

THOUSANDS AFFLICTED

Thousands of men in every community suffer from these ailments, weaknesses and other physical shortcomings without knowing that very frequently they are caused by prostatic failure.

MANY DOCTORS ENDORSE MASSAGE

Massaging for the alleviation of Prostate Trouble is as old as time, and some of the most outstanding authorities in the medical profession recommend massage as a safe effective treatment. (See Reference Book of the Medical Sciences, Vol. VII, 3rd Edition.)

USE "PROSAGER"

—a new invention which enables any man to massage his Prostate Gland in the privacy of his home. It often brings relief with the first treatment and must help or it costs you nothing. No Drugs or Electricity.

Dr. W. D. Smith
INVENTOR

UNSOLICITED LETTERS OF GRATITUDE

The following are extracts from letters received, which are on file in our office; the complete letters and addresses will be sent to anyone who is interested in inquiring for them.

Mr. Wm. E. Lemon, San Francisco, California, writes: "After using the Prosager I am well again and feel none of the symptoms of Prostate Trouble." Mr. Wm. F. Lee, Washington, D. C., states in his letter: "The Prosager is mild, I would not be without it."

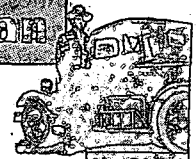
Mr. Henry Zitman, Auburn, Indiana, says: "I will say this much for the Prosager; it has saved me from an operation. The Doctor that treated me before I got it says it is a fine thing to use. If there is any one in this territory that wants to know about it, direct them to me." Mr. Judson Trefethan, New Castle, N. H., writes about the Prosager: "I think it is a great invention, my Doctor came to see it and he said it was a good invention."

FREE BOOKLET Explains Vital Details and Our TRIAL OFFER

A one cent post card with your name and address plainly written is all that is necessary, address card to

MIDWEST PRODUCTS CO., B-1410, Kalamazoo, Mich.

Be a McNess Man



No Time Like Now to Get in—

Make up to $75 a week

It's no trick to make up to $12 a day when you use your car as a McNess "Store on Wheels." Farmers are buying everything they can from McNess men. Attractive business-getting prizes, also money-saving deals to customers make selling McNess daily necessities a snap. This business is depression-proof.

Use Your CAR to Raise Your PAY

We Supply Capital—Start Now!

There's no better work anywhere—pays well, permanent, need no experience to start and we supply capital to help you get started quick. You start making money first day. Write at once for McNess Dealer Book—tells all—no obligation. (92-A)

FURST & THOMAS, 351 Adams St., Freeport, Ill.

Train for a Well-Paid Hotel Position

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Good positions for trained men and women in hotel, club, restaurant, and institutional field. Previous experience proved unnecessary. Qualify in FOUR MONTHS—learn on real hotel equipment, under expert instructors. National Placement Service. FREE of extra charge. New Day Classes start Oct., Jan., Feb. Catalog FREE!

LEWIS HOTEL TRAINING SCHOOLS
Division RMS 7134 Washington, D. C.

In answering any advertisement on this page it is desirable that you mention this magazine.

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The March

(NOTE: It is the purpose of this department to warn readers in all sections of the country of the latest schemes designed to defraud them, and in many instances, the names and descriptions of the operators. If you are approached by any of these schemers, get all the information possible and report the circumstances immediately to your local police authorities. They will know what to do. Rest assured that you will be doing someone a favor. Man is the only animal that can be skinned more than once.)

SERVICE(?)

Economic Associates,
91 Wall St., New York

A NUMBER of executives have recently reported receiving documents from the above headed as follows:

The Nation's Business
Economic Service

Then follows the name of the recipient and the notation:

"To Market Economic Service..$5.00

At the bottom of this document appears the following:

"*Please Note:*—To insure proper credit, this memo should be returned with your remittance. No receipt will be sent unless requested. Our endorsement on your check is your receipt."

Business men receiving this have construed it as a bill and state they have not authorized such a billing. Others have confused the name, *The Nation's Business* with the name of the official publication of the United States Chamber of Commerce, which is *Nation's Business.*

Economic Associates is operated by one Joseph Luck, who admits that these documents are sent to persons who have not subscribed to the "service" he offers. He formerly operated another publication and solicited subscriptions to it by similar "billing" methods. This is one way of collecting money for something a person hasn't ordered and probably doesn't want.

"DIRIGOLD"

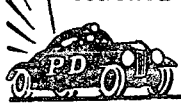
Looks Like Gold Contains No Gold

HOUSEHOLD articles offered for general sale in some stores and stamped "Dirigold" contain no gold. The Federal Trade Commission has issued a complaint against the American Dirigold Corporation, Kokomo, Ind., Dirigold Metals Corp., Barrington, Ill., and the Dirigold Distributors, Chicago, charging them with making representations that their tableware articles contain gold. According to the complaint, this is not a fact.

LAUGH

Constables Join Fake Association

THE offices of the Illinois Magistrates, Justices and Constables Association at 6 North Clark Street, Chicago, were recently raided by Chicago police. The records seized indicated that following a circular letter campaign among police magistrates, constables and justices throughout the state, 350 of them "joined" by paying two dol-



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lars each for a proposed magazine to be called *Law and Justice*. This payment was also to include membership in the "Association."

Business men who were solicited for advertisements in *Law and Justice* by high-pressure salesmen were offered a "courtesy card" which was supposed to be of great value to them under certain circumstances.

Charles C. Roe, Secretary and Treasurer of the Association, when questioned prior to the raid about the propriety and advantage of issuing these courtesy membership cards to business men, asserted that this is the "age of fix." However, the Chicago Police Department seems to have "fixed" the Association permanently.

There are a great number of these so-called "Associations" operating in various sections of the country, few of which are bona fide. Many of them are operated by "fixers" who *need* "fixing."

ASSOCIATED NEWS
Old Trick Still Sells Photos

THE so-called "Associated News Photographic Service" is another name for a New York commercial photographer whose representatives cover the entire East and who, as far as can be determined, has no legitimate news service affiliation.

Soliciting business men to pose for photographs which, the salesmen claim, are to be published in newspapers and magazines, the scheme is merely an attempt to force the "poser" to buy photographs at high prices when the proofs are submitted by salesmen for an "O. K."

CANADA
"Tipsters" Move to the Dominion

MOST of the boys who put out the "tipster sheets" which tout phony stocks have packed their bags and are now sojourning in Canada. Specializing there on gold-mining stocks, they route their sheets to sucker lists in the United States and follow through with long-distance telephone calls

Getting a tipster sheet under way not only requires time but also a fair investment and before the tipsters can get fairly started on this side of the line, the Securities and Exchange Commission is on their necks, hence the exodus.

Be wary of *any* stock offerings coming to you from Canada.

MAGAZINES
Subscription Solicitor Grabs Deposits

JAMES HORTON, claiming to represent the Periodical Service Co., of Buffalo, N. Y., is collecting deposits on subscriptions to magazines. Mail addressed to this company is returned marked: *Unknown*. Horton is traveling fast and complaints have been received from many cities.

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Seven Faces

O'Rourke motioned to the big fellow in the brownish tweed

By Max Brand

CHAPTER I

Last Will and Testament

INSPECTOR HENRY CORRIGAN of the New York Police Department missed his lunch and was late for dinner. Inspectors are expected to take such things in their stride. It is supposed that when a man rises to such a high place he will be nourished by glory. The Inspector did not feel nourished, and for hours the frown had been cutting deeper and deeper between his eyes until its blackness entered his brain. So, when the telephone call came in, he snatched up the instrument and snarled into it. His voice smoothed out when he heard the name.

"All right. Put him on," he said. And then: "Hello, Mr. Cobb! What's the matter? Have you had another letter? I tell you what, Mr. Cobb, people who

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"He's got it latched," said the porter. "You knocked for him right loud?"

write letters are usually too yellow to be dangerous. Speak up, man. The telephone isn't going to shoot you and there's nobody listening in. . . . . Why to Chicago? Will Chicago be any safer for you than New York? What you ought to do is to come into town and put up in some big hotel. You need to have lights and people around you. . . . How can you *know* that you'll be murdered tonight? . . . Damned nonsense, Mr. Cobb. I can't do it. The city of New York can't assign bodyguards to travelers. . . . Wait a moment. Two of my men are going to Chicago on a bit of work, and they may as well go now. Yes, yes, yes, Mr. Cobb. The two of them together make the best man in the department. If you're going to take the late train to Chicago, they'll meet

It Takes Two Men—Patrick O'Rourke and Angus Campbell—to Make the One Best Man on New York's Homicide Squad. Together, Bickering as Usual, They Begin an Amazing Series of Adventures Which Will Test Their Mettle — or Destroy Them!

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you at the gate. What will you wear? . . . Mr. Cobb, I can't guarantee anything except that Campbell and O'Rourke together will do a great many things that no other man would think of. Goodbye."

A moment later the Inspector was ringing Detective Angus Campbell, saying: "You start for Chicago on the ten thirty-five. You have to give testimony on that Rand-Weston case and you might as well do it now. . . . Yes, O'Rourke will go along with you. Get in touch with him at once. . . . A man to meet at the station, at the gate to the train. His name is John Cobb. He'll wear a black overcoat and a black hat. Medium height, sallow face, short, black mustache. Rather thin fellow. The fool has an idea that someone is going to murder him tonight and he's running all the way to Chicago. Keep an eye on him. . . . I don't care what *you* want, Campbell; I'm telling you that you *have* to go with O'Rourke. Come here to the office on your way to the train and get a note from me introducing you two to John Cobb. Goodbye."

The Inspector, not a man given to making foolish statements, was nevertheless wrong when he asserted that no one had listened in on his conversation with Cobb, for, at this moment, the officer at the switchboard on the lower floor of the building was speaking softly into the big receiver which was strapped around his chest and projected in front of his face: "Hello! That you? John Cobb is on the run. Taking the ten thirty-five for Chicago. Two detectives are going along on the same train with the Inspector's orders to keep a close eye on him. One is Patrick O'Rourke. American Irish. Fat and red-faced. Always chewing a cigar when he isn't smoking one. Looks good-natured. You'll spot him easily. The other is Angus Campbell. Scotch as you find 'em. Thin, shoulders a little stooped. Sour-looking. That's it. I don't know just what your game is, madame, but you'd better keep your hands off when O'Rourke and Campbell are around. Separate they're not much, but when they're together they hate each other so much that they grind one another sharp as razors. That's all I can say, except that John Cobb will be wearing a black hat and a black coat. Goodbye."

THE crowd entering the Grand Central at the corner of Vanderbilt Avenue and Forty-second was thickly compacted, weighted with luggage, but Charles Latimer went through the mass like a bull moose overstepping shrubbery. He had about him the bulk of a tackle and the light step of a half-back. The loose tweeds were no more than a brownish mist over Latimer's strength, and the heavy brogans could not weight his feet. Men looked twice when they saw Latimer's back, the coat creasing a bit between the shoulder-blades; women looked twice when they saw his face. Only a sea-wind, one felt, could have blown the brown so deep beneath the skin. He was a smiling fellow, not handsome, but good to look at. Only when the smile stopped, something about him changed. Wood is kind to the touch; steel is grim stuff to handle. And when Latimer stopped smiling the sympathy went out of his face and left one aware of cold eyes and the broad, stubborn strength of his jaw. People who saw him on a gay evening hardly could recognize him as the same man the next morning.

When he came down the steps into the marble shimmer of the great room,

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under that wide dome with its curve as effortless as the sweep of the sky, he moved more slowly. For the man in the black hat and the black overcoat was being joined by two fellows near the information stand. He spoke to them with jerky nods of the head, and went on, with his coat collar as high about his face and his hat still pulled low. The pair, one fat and comfortable and one with the uneasy leanness of a hunting hound, fell a step behind the other and seemed to exchange glances before they proceeded briskly after him. Latimer followed them with his eyes as far as the gate of the Chicago train; then he went to the ticket window.

A girl came hurrying into the waiting line just ahead of him. Her porter stood with folded arms nearby, resting in every line. The girl herself was too pretty to be true. Too pretty to be good, was Latimer's inward phrasing, for he felt that the Creator would not lavish on a wife and mother such excess care in modeling. Eyes, for instance, are surely made to see with, not merely to be seen. She was accustomed as a moving picture star or a stage favorite to the admiration of men, so that when she turned a little and found his eyes on her, her own glance blanked him out of the picture and moved calmly away.

Latimer stopped smiling, and grinned. . . .

PENN Station is dreary, grand, and gray. Gay wall-painting cannot relieve its gloom and all the clustering lights cannot lift its mood above that of London in the smoky murk of a fog. But Grand Central is bright, confused, charming. And everyone who takes a train from it seems bound for a happy destination. The big, unresonant spaces absorb voices. Even an Englishman will speak out loud in Grand Central Station, because the noise filters away as though into the dreaminess of a summer's day. But the two detectives who walked half a pace behind the man in the black coat did not utter a word either to him or to each other. Patrick O'Rourke, with a cigar fuming under the red whisky veins of his nose, kept his hands in his overcoat pockets and stared straight before him. Skinny Angus Campbell, to whom the fumes of the cheap cigar were wafting, turned an eye as bright and cold as winter towards his companion. The porter who carried the luggage of the man in black staggered, with sagging knees, in the rear. He had heavy suitcases in each hand and smaller valises under the pressure of his elbows. It was a mule-load of clumsy weight, but no one pitied him as he struggled forward, trying to go swiftly in an effort to finish his agony sooner.

The man in black stopped short, hunching his coat up around his shoulders.

"That's the car," he said. "I've got the drawing-room in there. One of you go on ahead, please!"

"And look for what, Mr. Cobb?" asked Campbell. "Rattlesnakes, or men with machine guns?"

"For goodness sake, one of you go first!" Cobb repeated.

"All right," said Campbell, and walked into the car.

Patrick O'Rourke came a little closer to Cobb. As he spoke, he kept the cigar in the corner of his mouth, the fat of his lips stretching to accommodate speech, and the stench of the cigar fuming out in puffs towards Cobb.

"Mr. Cobb," he said, "if you wanta get everybody looking at you, just keep

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that hat pulled down over your eyes and that coat hoisted up around your ears. Anybody could see that you're either sick or scared that somebody will see you."

"Sick! That's the thing I want to look," said Cobb. But if they see my face. . . ."

"If who sees your face?" asked O'Rourke.

"They! They!" muttered Cobb vaguely. He fell into a coughing fit, and then went on angrily, his husky voice subdued by a wheeze in his throat: "If I knew who they were, wouldn't I have set the police on them? Sick! It's got to seem that I'm sick."

Here he took O'Rourke's arm and leaned on it.

"My soul, man," protested Cobb, choking and coughing again, "when you smoke cigars, can't you buy the ones that are made of tobacco?"

O'Rourke endured the insult with the calm of a fat man and puffed contentedly. "Cigars are like life," he observed. "What you get used to is what you want. What the hell is scaring you so much, Mr. Cobb, anyway?"

"They're going to murder me!" cried Cobb. "I'll be a dead man before morning, O'Rourke. Don't stand there like a senseless lump of fat! Look at the last letter."

He dragged from his pocket a small square of brown paper on which were a few typed words:

> I'm coming for you the night of the fifteenth or before sunrise of the sixteenth, Cobb. Make your soul ready.

O'Rourke handed the paper to Campbell, who had just returned from the car. Campbell gave it a glance, snorted through his thin, pinched nose, and gave it back to Cobb.

"How is it inside?" asked Cobb, anxiously, putting out a gloved hand towards Campbell.

"Why, they might all be murderers," said Campbell. "They got the look. I never seen anybody getting ready for bed that didn't look like a murderer. Take the collar and tie off any man and he looks ready to slog somebody on the head or stick a knife in the back."

Cobb groaned and lifted his hand to his face, rubbing nervously at a tuft of black mustache.

"Shall we go in?" he asked.

An astonishingly pretty girl went by with the flowing step of a dancer. Her porter followed, two bags battering around his knees.

"Who's that?" demanded Cobb, in a whisper. "I've seen her somewhere! Who is she?"

"Likely from Hollywood," said O'Rourke, "and a first name something like Sylvia, or Rose, or Myrtle. She looks like one of the ones, all right."

A BIG man in brownish tweeds, making the solid burden of a pigskin suitcase light in his left hand, went by with a quiet side glance that took in the group of three. He continued making his way down the platform.

"Why did he look at me?" asked Cobb. "Who is that?"

"That's Timberline Bill from the Rockies," said O'Rourke. "He eats a fried Mexican three times a week for his liver. How in hell do I know everybody in the Grand Central?"

"He looked at me!" whispered Cobb.

"Sure he looked at you," answered O'Rourke. "Everybody's gonna look at you and wonder where you got the chills and fever."

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"True! True! What am I doing to stand out here? Get me inside! Get me inside!"

O'Rourke walked first, this time, waddling down the aisle of the sleeper through a barrage of black looks from people who were standing at their bunks arranging matters inside and getting ready to enclose themselves for a night of joltings and sudden stoppages, nightmares and frightened wakings. All strangers are enemies, particularly in a sleeping car. In the wake which O'Rourke left behind him, Cobb went down the length of the car to the drawing room, Number A, and Campbell followed. When they were inside, Cobb shrank back into the narrow corner near the door.

"The window-curtain!" he gasped. "The light!"

Campbell pulled down the curtain. O'Rourke switched out the lights except one small, red globe, and Cobb groaned with relief. This dim light left all faces compositions of tarry black shadows and wavering features. The eyes, in particular, were deep pools of darkness that held one uncertain, luminous point.

"You like it all graveyard like this?" asked O'Rourke.

"They can't see in, now," said Cobb.

"They won't need to," answered O'Rourke, "you'll scare yourself to death before morning. Listen, Mr. Cobb. Why didn't you go and get police protection at your home? A bird that starts running away is the one that gets shot at."

"Protection at home?" said Cobb in the same husky voice. "The men sent to guard me might be the ones hired by him to murder me!"

"If you look at it that way," said O'Rourke, "maybe Campbell and me have been bought up, too. Maybe we're the ones that are gonna blow you down."

Cobb shrank smaller in the corner of the seat and said nothing. But he turned his head quickly, like the swiftly pivoting head of a bird, to look first at O'Rourke and then at Campbell.

"Ah, shut up your nonsense, O'Rourke," said Campbell. "You waste everybody's time with your gabble. I'd rather listen to a guinea-hen cackle."

Cobb drew a breath of relief and settled back in the seat again. A moment later, he had dropped his face between his two gloved hands. Without audible warning, without the slightest jarring, the great train began to roll over the rails as smoothly as water down an endless flume. It gathered speed. Cobb lifted his head from his hands.

"You forgot something?" asked O'Rourke.

Cobb, without answering, pulled an envelope from his pocket and took out a fountain pen. He began to write with painful slowness, pausing when a lurch of the train disturbed his hand. The light was so dim that he had to bend far over to study the paper which he held on his bony knee.

"Have a flash of light now, brother?" asked O'Rourke

"No, no! No!" cried Cobb.

"Rabbits are like that; and cats," said O'Rourke. "They like the dark. It makes the rabbits feel safer, and the cats do their best hunting then."

"You have to talk. That's all. You have to talk!" exclaimed Campbell. "Here! I'll hold a flashlight for you, Mr. Cobb."

"A flashlight?" said Cobb. "Well—yes—thank you, Campbell."

Campbell snapped out a small pocket torch that threw a core of white light

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on the envelope and paler outer margins over the trousers of Cobb. He had not taken off his gloves, so great was his eagerness to put down his idea at once.

Campbell read without great difficulty, in spite of the continual wavers which the motion of the train caused:

> I, John Cobb, being in my right mind and in full possession of my senses, though in fear of death before the morning, do hereby give and bequeath to my beloved cousin, Lawrence Purvis Pelton, as my sole heir, all my property in real estate, cash, or otherwise; of whatever nature.
>
> (Signed) *John Cobb*
> (Witnessed) .....
> .....

The jerking, uncertain writing grew suddenly more smoothly fluent as the familiar flow of the signature came off the pen.

"Will you read this and witness it?" asked Cobb.

Campbell grunted: "You know what you're doing, man? You're rich. Are you gonna pour all that you've got into one hopper—"

"Will you sign? Will you sign?" demanded Cobb, impatiently.

"Well . . ." muttered Campbell, shaking his Scotch head.

Cobb groaned.

He signed forthwith, and Cobb snatched pen and envelope to offer both to O'Rourke.

The Irishman signed without more to do, but as he handed back the document to Cobb, he said calmly: "Well, you're *worth* murdering now—to Lawrence Purvis Pelton."

"Pelton?" said Cobb, angrily. "He's in the West. I telephoned to him this morning!"

"Ay," said O'Rourke, "but maybe he ain't too poor to hire some helping hands, brother!"

CHAPTER II

Telegram for Miss Worth

THE unpleasant suggestion which O'Rourke had made did not weigh very long upon the nervous spirit of Mr. Cobb. He shrank back into his corner for a moment, to be sure, so that between the turned-up velvet collar of his coat and the turned-down brim of his hat his face was a mere smudge of darkness; but then he rallied and sat up straight. He held out the signed and witnessed envelope, with a stiff, straight arm, like that of a fencer, to Campbell.

"I want you to take this," he ordered, crisply. "Murder—they can't rub out this will. They can't steal the future of my property. And what does a man live by? By his assets!"

As Campbell took the envelope, frowning, Cobb gripped both hands together, hard, and broke into two or three notes of high-pitched laughter. There was something so strange about the key and the sound of this laughter that O'Rourke, who was as keenly sensitive to sounds as he was indifferent to smells, started a little and looked again at Cobb.

Cobb said, shortly: "Well, that's that!—I don't need you now. Not for a while. Every half hour, one of you come and knock at this door. If it's not opened by me, have the porter open it—have him break it down—smash it down and get in—"

His voice had gone up almost to a scream. He got to his feet with a hand clutching the breast of his overcoat.

"Aw, steady, steady!" said O'Rourke. "You got a lot of life in you yet. Buck up, brother. Why

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shouldn't one of us stay right in here with you?"

"I want to be alone. I have to be alone," said Cobb. "Stay here with one of you? . . . Go to sleep with eyes watching me? My God, I couldn't stand it! No, no. Get out. Please! And every half hour, come back. Just knock and look in."

"You mean," said O'Rourke, "that we're gonna stay awake all night and take a look at you every half hour?"

"Why not? Why not?" shrilled Cobb. "Ah, wait a moment! I understand. I didn't mean for nothing. Here, take this. And you. I didn't mean for nothing. For goodness' sake, my friends, keep a close watch. Observe every face on the train. Mark down every suspicious person."

He pushed a bill into O'Rourke's hand and another into Campbell's.

O'Rourke crumpled the paper as though it were for the wastepaper basket before he shoved it into a trousers pocket with a forefinger. He said: "You want one of us to stand outside the door of the stateroom?"

"And mark the place where I'm located on this train? Am I insane? Have I lost my wits, or did you ever have any?" screamed Cobb. "So that at the first stop the murderers could bomb this end of the car? Have you no sense at all, O'Rourke?"

The two detectives left the stateroom. They went on back to the lounge car, where Campbell took a look at his watch.

"Half hour. I'll take the first turn," he said.

O'Rourke said: "How much you get?"

"Fifty dollars," said Campbell, and a smile twitched one side of his mouth.

"Yeah? Look!" growled O'Rourke.

He was gathering a fresh cigar into the loose of his lips, with a singular dexterity biting off the end and ejecting the fragment from the corner of his mouth without supporting the cigar for a moment with his hand. The prehensile capacity of both upper and lower lips made this unnecessary. He flicked on the flame of his lighter and smiled down at it as he started his cloud of smoke. Campbell studied the bill and handed it back.

"A century, eh?" said he.

"A hundred smacks," O'Rourke agreed, pocketing the money with his former nonchalance. "How much has this bird John Cobb got, all together?"

"Fifteen millions," said Campbell, slowly sinking into a chair beside that of O'Rourke, his eyes lost in a trance of thought. "Divide that by three for the facts. Five millions."

"A guy can't pile up that much from nothing without having a brain," said O'Rourke. "A guy can't make that much without being a judge of men."

"Meaning that he picked you out for the hundred and me for the fifty?" asked Campbell.

"Meaning? I wasn't meaning nothing," protested O'Rourke, with elaborate carelessness, shrugging his shoulders and looking away for a moment.

Campbell licked the pallor of his thin lips and stared fixedly at O'Rourke. He said not a word.

"This cluck of a John Cobb," O'Rourke went on. "What you think? Just cuckoo, or a plain fool?"

"A man that makes fifteen millions has to have a brain," Campbell echoed.

"Maybe," agreed O'Rourke. "There ain't fifteen million dollars' worth of luck in the world. How did Cobb make his money?"

"You got assigned to this job, didn't

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you?" Campbell snarled. "Why don't you look up the facts for yourself? Cobb made his stake out West. He was hitched to some phony mining deals. Then the gold price went up and he sold out for his big stake. Why don't you work up your own stuff?"

"I keep my time for the big things," O'Rourke rumbled, with his grin spilling from his cigar far across the other side of his face. "I don't do the secretary work."

CAMPBELL swallowed. He said, pleasantly: "Maybe that's why they assign me such a lot to the same cases with you . . . so's I can do the secretary job?"

"Maybe. I been wondering," said O'Rourke.

The thin hand of Campbell opened like a pair of jaws, seized a portion of the thin air, and strangled it with a slow compression of the fingers.

"I been wondering too," said Campbell, nodding. "I thought perhaps it was because they didn't want to turn a soggy Irish drunk loose by himself."

"Never drunk, boy," O'Rourke corrected, resting a hand momentarily on Campbell's shoulder with an air of beneficent kindness. "The Irish never get drunk. Only good-natured."

A purple spot appeared on Campbell's cheek.

"Take your hand off my shoulder!" he murmured.

"Sure," said O'Rourke, letting the hand slowly slide away. "Friendship is the sort of thing that a Scotchman never could understand."

A uniformed lad came into the lounge car, saying rapidly, softly: "Miss Worth? Miss Worth? Miss Josephine Worth? Telegram for you, Miss Worth."

He had stopped half-way down the car where that amazingly pretty girl was sitting. She put down her magazine and, looking up to take the message, showed the slight smile of beauty, not of consciousness, that stayed on her lips.

"She holds her eyes right straightforward, like she was in a spotlight," said O'Rourke. "I dunno where she's going but it costs more'n four cents a mile."

"Rotten," said Campbell. "You're always rotten. I've seen pigs that would rather eat spoiled apples than fresh ones."

"Listen," said O'Rourke, "why don't you sit some place else? I've got all the information that I want out of you. Every time I look at you, it reminds me when I was a poor little boy and the winter mornings were getting into my chilblains. Get the hell out, will you?"

Campbell started to rise in a rage. Then he settled back. He was hunting rapidly for words, his eyes blinking, but he could find nothing to say.

"Here, steward," said O'Rourke. "Couple Scotch highballs, will you? Kind of on the run, brother, eh?"

The waiter went out with his white apron swishing. Now as Miss Josephine Worth sat with bowed head, her fur boa slipped from her lap to the floor, and as she leaned to pick it up, a big, brown hand forestalled her. She looked up at the huge form of the man.

"My name is Latimer, Miss Worth," he said. "Don't creep back to your compartment and sit there and shiver with your bad news. Take your chair again and have a drink with me. You need a drink. You're sick. Settle back and tip down your head a little. Then nobody will see how sick you are, and how white. If you walk back through the train, looking like this,

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everybody'll know that hell is to pay."

She looked at the brown of his face and his smile, which seemed an earnest of helpfulness. Then she slipped back into her chair.

"Cognac," said Latimer to the waiter. "Two. That Courvoisier. The old stuff."

Up the aisle, O'Rourke was passing a glass.

"This'll do you good," he was saying to Campbell.

Campbell had the glass almost to his lips when he remembered with a start.

"Drink with you? I'd rather drink with swine out of a trough!"

He put the glass back with a jar that started the liquid sloshing from side to side. O'Rourke was merely laughing. Campbell snatched a paper and pretended to read.

"I can blot 'em both up, brother," chortled O'Rourke. "My gosh, how it must be burning you up to miss a free drink!"

Campbell looked at his watch. The half hour was up, and he went hastily down the aisle. Behind him he could feel, rather than hear, the pulsation of O'Rourke's laughter. He could see in his mind's eye the large, loose face spilled into hearty mirth. . . .

CHAPTER III

Meeting in the Night

IN the lounge car sat a man strikingly foreign in appearance. He wore a short, pointed, black beard, and his heavy, black eyebrows were arched with an odd openness of expression. His black hair flowed long and thick. He had no mustaches to go with the beard, and this left clear to view the red of his full lips, a young mouth in the midst of that middle-aged face. He might have been a stage villain, or a German from the Rhine, or a Frenchman of an old school, but the flow of his big, soft tie somehow gave assurance that he was first of all a fraud.

Perhaps he had Southern ancestors and wished to dress the part, using 1860 as his model. At any rate, in his heart Aloysius Grosvenor was a confidence man, though he could not have won the ear of anyone except a child or an old woman, he had put so much false gentility on his back. To look at him was to think of Bowie knives and lynchings and mint juleps and shadowy verandas.

Aloysius Grosvenor now rose from his chair and stood for a moment to pull down his waistcoat a little and straighten his coat. He liked to make these pauses whenever he rose to his full height, so that anyone who wished would be able to look their fill upon him. Then he walked with slow dignity down the aisle, and it seemed to him that the ladies, as he went by, were turning their heads and gazing with covert admiration after him. For females he felt a generous compassion not untinged with contempt.

He went straight back through the train and stood for a moment outside the door of the stateroom which O'Rourke and Campbell were guarding. Someone was snoring in an upper berth nearby. Here and there were bulges in the heavy green curtains, where a sleeper lay crookedly in his bed. When Grosvenor had surveyed this scene with his usual calm, he rapped on the stateroom door. He had to repeat the knock before the door swung half-open.

"Well? Well?" snapped a quick, nervous voice.

"It's just old Al," said Grosvenor. "Old Al Grosvenor."

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He put out his big foot. The door jarred heavily against the sole of it. The steel door creaked a little.

"Don't be that way," said Grosvenor. "You want to see me, don't you?"

The door opened again, a faltering, hesitant motion.

"Yes, Al. Of course I want to. Come in?"

"If you want to see me, switch on the light so you can have a chance," chuckled Grosvenor.

"Well, hurry in!" bade the other.

The lights clicked on. The smaller man stood blinking at that startling brightness as Grosvenor strode in and pushed the door shut behind him. He put the weight of his broad shoulders against the wall and towered over his host as he stated: "I've got a gun. If you make any funny moves, I'll smash your skull in with the butt of it, you rat-faced son of Belial."

The other looked up to Grosvenor, not with fear, but with a steady, cold, poisonous hate in his eyes. He shrank from the narrow passage at the door, and took the place where he had been sitting before. His body seemed to shrink smaller in his clothes; his face was white but again, it seemed, not with fear so much as with overwhelming horror and disgust. He kept watching Grosvenor as one might watch a dangerous beast that has escaped from behind bars.

Grosvenor, taking the opposite place, pulled out a cigar, bit off the end, spat it upon the floor, and lighted his smoke, all the while continuing his survey of the other, brightly attentive, pleased with himself, but extremely upon the *qui vive* for things sudden and unexpected.

As he smoked, his lips grew moist and shone a brighter red than ever, as though he had been eating something syrupy and sweet and had neglected wiping his mouth.

"Glad, aren't you?" asked Grosvenor.

For an answer, he had silence and those drifting, watchful eyes.

Grosvenor laughed. "You know how I feel?" he asked. "I feel like I'd sat down facing one of those damned little side-winding rattlesnakes that're apt to jump and bite you in the face. I can feel your eyes take hold of me like that."

HE took a pinch out of the air with thumb and forefinger. His nails were manicured with the care an anxious girl might give to her hands. His fingers really were slender, tapering, beautiful. Usually he kept them encased in gloves, and even now, as he smoked, his left hand was still gloved.

"Are you going to talk or sit there and blink?" asked Grosvenor.

"I'll talk."

"Kind of a health trip you're taking?"

"No."

"Go right ahead and spill the beans," said Grosvenor. "I dunno, but I guess that I've got you where I always wanted to have you."

"You have."

"Oh, you're gonna admit it, are you?" asked Grosvenor, suddenly so interested that he leaned forward and rested his left elbow on his knee.

"I admit it."

"You look sick."

"I feel sick."

"It does me a lot of good to see you like this," declared Grosvenor. "Outside of having you down and stamping your face off, I can't think of anything that I'd rather see than

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the whites of your eyes when you roll 'em like that. How scared are you?"

"I'm not scared. I'm sick."

Grosvenor drew in a long, long breath and shook his head.

"You are. By Harry, you are!" he said. "You're sick. What kind of poison's killing you?"

"I've got to talk. Just give me a little time. I need to get my breath."

"Yeah, and arrange the lies you'll tell."

Grosvenor, watching, saw a strange smile twitch at the corners of the other's mouth.

Then the odd answer came: "No, Al. I can't lie. It's the first time in my life that I can't lie. There's nothing I can do. I'm trapped. The moment I saw you, I knew I was trapped. I tried to slam the door in your face, and it seemed to me that it was the teeth of the trap closing over me, sinking into my soul."

"Soul?" said Grosvenor. He laughed a little, keeping his delighted eyes upon the other. "There ain't a thing you can do, eh?"

"There's nothing. Literally nothing. If I had the brains of an angel, still there would be nothing to do."

"You've got to sit and take it, eh?" asked Grosvenor.

"That's what I've got to do."

"Don't it damn near kill you to have your hands strapped behind you?" asked Grosvenor.

"That's what it does. It just about kills me. I feel as though I were dying now."

"You look it, too," gloated Grosvenor.

"Well, I'll have to make my start."

"Take your time," said Grosvenor. "Plan the way you're going to deal your cards."

"Face up."

"The hell you will," drawled Grosvenor. "You couldn't make a straight deal. Not if you were on the edge of hell!"

He watched the singular smile that rewarded this remark, and listened with starting eyes as he heard the answer:

"I'm not on the edge of hell. I'm *in* hell. I'm in the center of it."

"In hell, and in my hands," said Grosvenor. "I guess that's about the same thing."

"Not entirely, but almost."

"Start in with the yarn, then."

"Steady yourself, Grosvenor."

"Words can't do anything to me," answered Grosvenor. "I've absorbed too much lead in my day; words don't matter."

"What's the biggest stake you've ever had?"

"About a quarter of a million."

"Divide by five. Perhaps you've had fifty thousand at your peak, eh?"

Grosvenor shrugged his shoulders. He even laughed. "All right," he said. "Call it anything you want. You always were a damned kind of a smart snake, at that."

"Now listen to me. You're going to be rich."

"That's good news. How rich?"

"About ten million dollars!"

"Ah, my golly!" said Grosvenor, whispering.

"Don't let your cigar go out. I said ten millions. I'd rather see the money go to a baboon. That's what you are. A brainless ape. You're a face; you're not a man. You're a great, fat, roosting swine. You've only got an instinct to do wrong, and you haven't the wit to raise the devil that you'd like to. But—you're to get ten million dollars!"

Grosvenor had changed color. His

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mouth sagged, but his widened eyes were busy drinking in the enormous hope.

"Ten millions!" he whispered, and the sudden outthrust of his jaw told that he felt the money was his, that he would keep, defend that huge fortune. It was as though he had acquired it by right.

"It comes to you because you happened to be here on this train. Tell me something, Grosvenor. You just happened to be here?"

"Put it that way. Now go on!"

"I'll go on," said a voice that groaned as it uttered the words.

"And all the cards face up, mind you," said Grosvenor.

"Damn you and what you want! It's what I have to give. That's what kills me."

He closed his eyes and held out both hands to keep the thought away from him. Afterwards, he made a great effort and mastered himself. He began to speak in a hard, steady, monotonous voice; and the sweat formed on the face of Grosvenor as he listened. It gathered in beads that ran together and started small rivulets that ran down his face to the thick of his beard.

CHAPTER IV

Locked Door

IN the lounge car, when the cognac came, the girl lifted her glass and tried to smile at Latimer. It was like turning a light on and off; the darkness seemed thicker. Without the smile, which was her gift from heaven, she was shrewdly altered, stripped to a strange nakedness, and grown younger until she seemed hardly more than a child. She held the glass a moment at her lips before she drank a sip and then a small swallow. Her head inclined as she put down the glass.

"How is it?" asked Latimer.

"It's good, thank you!" said Josephine Worth.

"You been a lot in France?" he asked.

She looked up suddenly at him. He could not say that color was back in her face but it was less startlingly white. Trouble was still in her eyes but it was being strongly repressed; thought was there beside it.

As she began to speak, the slight smile returned to her lips.

"You know that I've a compartment; you know that I've been to France. What else, Mr. Latimer?" she asked.

After she had spoken, he continued to enjoy her for a moment before he answered, half-absently: "Chicago was as good for me as where I was going. After I bought a ticket to your place, I thought I might as well look up your address on the train. Do you mind?"

All the trouble left her eyes and only the thought remained in them. "I don't mind at all," she said, studying him.

"About France—you wanted that drink. You needed it. But you had to stop to try the bouquet of it an instant before you tried it, and then took a swallow. On this side of the water we don't ask questions with our noses. We just gulp and wait for the effect."

She leaned back in the chair and let her head rest against the cushion. It did not matter who saw her now, for the color was almost entirely restored.

She said: "If you want to talk, please do—I like to hear you!"

"I've got a nice straight left and a one-two punch," said Latimer. "Can you use them on your troubles?"

She looked out the opposite windows, where the bright image of the

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car swayed and trembled behind the glimmer of the glass; and through the image trailed vague masses, trees, houses, and lights smeared out into lines by the speed of the train.

"I can't use them," she said.

She drew off her gloves to lift the cognac glass again. Her hands were a good Twentieth Century brown.

"Where did you buy that tan? Florida?" he asked.

"Ultra violet," she said, turning her head part of the way and her eyes the rest.

"Do you have to be as careful as that?"

"Yes." She looked at him steadily. The smile would not leave her, but he saw the gravity in her eyes. "I don't dare to spoil the picture."

"Josephine Worth only has a pretty face and about twenty-five hundred bucks," suggested Latimer. He listened to the brutality of his own remark and added to it: "So she has to make time and cut corners."

"Josephine has a hundred and twenty-five dollars and a Hollywood trousseau," she said, impervious to his bluntness. She added to her sentence, as he had done to his: "But she doesn't cut corners."

"I thought it was something like Hollywood," said he.

"Everyone does. That's the trouble."

"The more the better," said Latimer.

"Don't you see?" said the girl, and she made a quick gesture that almost touched her face, modeling the line of it. "There's not enough character in the features. Not nearly enough."

"Too perfect," said Latimer, nodding. "No fly in the ointment. Too good to be true."

Here he found her looking at him again, weighing him calmly and accurately. "This sort of stuff is only right for the chorus," she said.

She threw the idea of "such stuff" away with an open-handed gesture.

"I saw something was wrong, and that was why I decided to come along," smiled Latimer.

"Do you like to say things like that," she asked, "because you think people will believe them, or because you know that they won't?"

"When a fellow weighs more than two hundred pounds," said Latimer, "he has to be silly. A big man who's also serious is a lot too much to be taken in single doses."

"Is that why?" said the girl. She looked out the windows again. Heavy rain was beginning to slant strokes of wet across them. The image of the interior was a spotted haze and the lights outside blurred together with startled scatterings of rays. The smile of the girl deepened as she shook her head. She laughed a little.

"Don't worry me like this, please," said Latimer.

"You're not like the rest," she answered. "You have reasons and everything."

HERE she surprised him with a sidelong glance and found that his face for the first time was entirely sober. It was hard brown rock and the eyes made her wince a little. This expression passed from him almost instantly and left him smiling.

"I'll be back in a few moments," he said, rising.

He went down the aisle with his big, easy stride. The train hit a curve and groaned to it with a deep side-sway, but Latimer went on with a perfect balance.

The girl, looking after him, waited

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until he had passed from view at the end of the car. Then she rose and followed him with that flowing suppleness of step which, to see, was always to remember.

"Sailor, that big bird," said O'Rourke to Campbell.

"Sailor?" said Campbell, drawn by his thought to forgetfulness that he was not speaking to O'Rourke. "Yeah, sailor, or anything hard. He looks to me like . . ."

Here he remembered how much he was detesting O'Rourke, and closed his teeth with a click. O'Rourke, all-understanding, laughed his loud, brawling laughter, and consulted his second drink. It was at this moment that the brakes of the train went on with an oily suddenness and brought it to a stop. There was a wait of a few moments; then it resumed its headway again.

A little later than this—about two or three minutes, they estimated afterward—O'Rourke looked at his watch and said: "Well, my turn, I suppose."

He got up, yawned, threw back his shoulders, and felt the pull of his belt against his stomach.

"I'm gonna take up exercise," said O'Rourke to himself, and went slowly down the aisle.

When he came to Cobb's car he saw, through the jiggling curtains of the wash-room, the colored porter asleep, with his head lying on one shoulder as though the neck were broken. The mouth of the negro was open. The jolting of the train made his lips move as though he were whispering a secret to a ghost.

O'Rourke stepped on to the stateroom and rapped at the door of it. He waited, rapped again, vainly, and then pounded heavily with the heel of his palm.

A drunken voice sounded behind him. He turned and saw a man in the adjoining upper berth sticking out his head and holding a half-emptied pint flask.

"Lishen," said the drunk. "Don't you go on bozzerin' him for drink. Bozzer me. Bozzer this pint."

"Pull in your ears," said O'Rourke.

The drunk looked sadly upon him and suddenly collapsed behind the curtains of his bed. O'Rourke went to the porter and shook him so that his curly head jogged up and down, back and forth.

"Stateroom A," said O'Rourke. "Open it up for me. Open it fast!"

The porter wakened, stared at him with a sort of angry hoplessness, and then staggered before him to Stateroom A.

There he turned and demanded: "What you want? Who wants to know?"

"I'm Detective O'Rourke from headquarters," said he. "Open that up!"

"My good Lord!" said the porter, and fitted a key into the lock.

He turned it back and forth and began to shake his head.

"He's got it latched right home," said the porter. "I guess the key won't work. You knocked for him right loud?"

"I knocked for him," said O'Rourke.

The porter lifted his foot and kicked half a dozen times. The clangor brought twenty heads out from behind curtains. Angry voices snarled up the aisle.

But O'Rourke remained heedless of them, leaning his hand pensively against the door. He was seeing only the will which had been scrawled on the back of the envelope by John Cobb.

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Fifteen million of even newspaper dollars is a lot of money.

CHAPTER V

Vanished!

THE wheels roared and did their clicking catch-step over the rail junctions beneath; the powerful steel springs rocked the weight of the car with a long, trundling motion.

O'Rourke, looking hazily over his shoulder, saw the big fellow in the brownish tweed coming up the aisle. O'Rourke stopped him with a raised finger.

"Try your shoulder on that door," he asked. "Latched on the inside."

"What's the matter?" asked Latimer.

"Why, I dunno," said O'Rourke. "Murder, maybe."

He waited until the eye of the big man settled on him and turned cold with seriousness.

"All right," said Latimer. "Lend me your gun, just in case."

O'Rourke unholstered the weapon, handed it over.

He tried the door knob with his hand, as though the feel of it might tell him something. Then he stepped back a pace, crouched, and drove his weight at the door. The bulging shoulder muscles cushioned the shook. The door squealed like a rat underfoot, and jogged a fraction of an inch open. Latimer stepped back again.

"Football!" said the porter.

"Yeah," said O'Rourke, absently.

Latimer struck again. The door banged opened and let him go floundering into the interior.

He was half-lost in that red-tinged dimness, but the hand of the porter found the switch at once and snapped on the lights.

"Why, there's nobody here at all!" said Latimer, rubbing the shoulder that had absorbed those two mighty shocks. Silently, he returned O'Rourke's revolver.

O'Rourke looked around him calmly. The first look is worth everything, he knew. He thought of Campbell hunched over a newspaper in the lounge car and his lips twitched with a sort of disgusted triumph.

One window had been raised as far as it would go, and the rain, slashing in aslant, had turned a section of the red plush of the seat black with wet that trickled to the floor again, drop by drop.

"Here!" said the porter. "Here's where that damn fool pulled the alarm signal and stopped the train, a while back. Look! Here's where it was pulled! He'll pay for that!"

"I guess he's paid for it," said O'Rourke, inquiring of the air with distended nostrils.

He found what he wanted in the corner near the couch. It was a small bottle with not a drop of liquid left inside, but the strong reek of chloroform went up the nostrils of O'Rourke as he sniffed at the open mouth of the phial.

He looked at the luggage, counted the four pieces of it, made sure that all were strapped securely. Then he leaned out the window. Something wet and hard and rough slapped him smartly across the face. It was not the blow but the fear that made O'Rourke duck back into the stateroom with his hand on his automatic.

Now he saw the thing move again through the darkness beyond the window with a snaky curving. He reached out and caught the end of a rope. When he pulled, it resisted strongly. He jerked hard but the rope

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remained in place. It was stout, new, shining, half-inch manila.

O'Rourke turned. Half a dozen passengers in pajamas were clustered at the open door of the stateroom. He shut it in their faces.

Then he said to Latimer: "You see a fellow sitting with me back there in the lounge? Scrawny kind of a half-starved bird with his head hung out forward on the end of his neck like a jack o' lantern on a stick? Name of Campbell. Mind going and telling him that I want him here? You might say that Cobb's gone."

Latimer nodded and left.

"What's the next town?"

"Buffalo, boss," said the porter. "You think that gentleman heaved himself out the window?"

"I mean the next town along this line," answered O'Rourke.

"Bingham," said the porter. "But we don't—"

"Yes, we do," said O'Rourke. "Get the word forward to the engineer. We stop at Bingham. I'm O'Rourke, of the headquarters force in New York. Homicide squad. Mind that: homicide squad."

"Yes, sir. Yes, boss," said the porter, rubbing his shoulders against the wall as he tried to get distance from this terrible man of the crime world.

"Wait a moment. Where'd we stop down the line? Where'd the emergency signal stop the train?"

"Right the other side of Fullerton," said the porter. "I looked out for a minute and seen a couple piles of ties by the way and the lights of Fullerton sprinkled around in the night just beyond. You can tell Fullerton because it's got three lights right up top on the hill and—"

"Stop this train at Bingham. Get about it!" commanded O'Rourke.

Campbell came in with big Latimer behind him.

"What's your name, brother?" asked O'Rourke.

"Charles Latimer," he answered.

"Thanks for helping out. Don't need you any more, Latimer. Thanks very much."

LATIMER left the stateroom. The door would not close entirely on account of the smashed lock.

"Well?" said Campbell, standing in the middle of the space between the two seats and poking out his head from side to side. "How?"

He found the chloroform flask the next moment and sniffed at it. Then his bright little eyes waited, like two twinkling stars, on the explanation from O'Rourke, the first man on the spot.

"The way of it ain't so hard to see."

He caught, again, the dangling rope end outside the window and showed it to Campbell.

"This rope's anchored to the top of the car," said O'Rourke. "Fellow lies up there. He knows what reservation Cobb's made, and he lies out up there and waits for a good time. Then he takes his chance and walks down the rope till he's beside the window. Cobb's in here. Asleep, likely. The fellow outside works the window up. . . ."

"He hangs on with one hand and works the window up, eh?" asked Campbell, sneering. "And the train hitting up seventy through the wind, and the rope greasy with rain?"

"Works the window up," O'Rourke went on, hating Campbell quietly with his eyes, "and then slides up the shade."

"And Cobb still sleeps?" asked Campbell.

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"The jitters he was in, he'd be asleep hard and fast, as soon as the pressure was taken off him. So then, the fellow eases his way in through the window. He's got the chloroform ready. He claps it over Cobb's mug in a handkerchief, say. When Cobb quits kicking, the lad pulls the alarm signal to stop the train. When it eases up, he slides Cobb through the window, drops after him, and carts him away."

"Why?" asked Campbell.

"Why is anybody with fifteen million berries kidnaped?" asked O'Rourke. "Be your age, Methusaleh."

"This job was done inside the train, not from the roof of it," said Campbell.

"Go on and talk. You don't bother me with your talking," said O'Rourke. "You're so damned wrong that sometimes you give me the right ideas."

"Roof of the car! How could a man lie up on the roof of the car? How did he get there? Couldn't have been there while the train was in the station, or he would have been seen. Couldn't have got up there after the train started moving," Campbell insisted.

O'Rourke jerked on the end of the rope.

"Seeing things ain't enough for you, Angus," he said. "You gotta chaw and swaller them before you're sure."

"I'm sure of Corrigan," answered Campbell. "I'm sure of the hell he'll raise when he finds out that Cobb got through our fingers."

"Who'd have it any other way?" answered O'Rourke. "If Cobb hadn't been grabbed, we wouldn't have anything to think about. It might have been some good guy that we'd be sorry about. But it's only a dirty, sneakin', yella dog—that John Cobb.... Leave me see the will, Angus."

Campbell drew out the document, looked at O'Rourke through a moment of doubt, and then handed it over. O'Rourke, disregarding the writing on the back of the envelope, pulled out the fold of paper which the letter contained. He read aloud from the sharp-angled script:

DEAR JOHN:

I'm about to give up the airplane. You're right. Even with liquor out of the picture, I haven't the sort of nerves that do well in the air. I'm looking about now to try to find someone who will buy the machine; but second-hand airplanes are less welcome than poor relations.

I've read over carefully the copies of the letters which you sent along. I can't make up my mind about them. I'd like to call them a gigantic hoax but there's a little note of grimness about them that inclines me to take them almost seriously. There *are* people who'd be glad to put a knife into you—or into me. They'd rather knife us than have money. Is it possible that some devilish freak of that sort has gotten on your trail?

My dear old fellow, take care of yourself. My advice is, first of all, to get in touch with the police and ask for protection. You know Corrigan, and if there's anything he can do for you, he ought to do it. My next advice—and think this over seriously—is that you should take a train and come straight out here to see me. To stay as long as you can. If trouble comes near us here, we can see it starting over the horizon twenty miles away! Think this over and let me know what you'll do.

Always affectionately,

LARRY.

O'Rourke said: "This Larry is the Lawrence Purvis Pelton who's the 'beloved cousin' of John Cobb. Maybe Pelton is fifteen million dollars richer, right now, than he was this morning."

"If this was murder," said Campbell, "tell me why they had to chloro-

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form Cobb and drag him through the window of the train?"

"I dunno," answered O'Rourke. "But murder has a sort of a smell about it. Murder is what I smell. Murder is what Cobb expected. Murder is what he got. Who gets off the train when she stops at Bingham up the line, here?"

"Neither of us does," said Campbell. "We go on to Chicago and turn in the evidence that hangs Rand and Weston. We can take this up on the backtrail."

"You stick on the train, brother," said O'Rourke. "I'm getting off. Your evidence on Rand and Weston is as good as mine. About the only thing you know how to do is to talk to a jury. Maybe because talk don't cost anything. You stick on the train and I'll go off and find Cobb for Corrigan."

"Go and be damned," said Campbell. "While you're gone, I'll find the murderer by checking who's missing off the train."

He gloated over O'Rourke through the simple effectiveness of this idea, and then left the stateroom.

Campbell and O'Rourke are already chin-deep in mystery and intrigue. Who are Josephine Worth and Latimer and Grosvenor? What was John Cobb fleeing—and how did it overtake him? Greater thrills and more suspense come in next week's smashing installment!

The Chicken and the Yegg

TO a wandering tribe of Gypsies must be credited the coining of the word, "yegg." The yegg of the tribe was the leading thief. The first of these leaders was a Gypsy named John Yegg whose prowess in stealing chickens and horses made him a big man, much respected by his fellows. As his fame spread, other Gypsies were flattered to be known as "the yegg" and, by their frequent appearance in police stations, gave the cops the idea that a yegg is a person who steals with more or less violence. Thus the expression came to be used as a label for that type of person.

—*John Berry.*

I WONDER WHY I FEEL SO LOW. I DIDN'T OVER-DO IT.
JUST TAKE AN ALKA-SELTZER, JOE, -- AND THERE'LL BE NOTHING TO IT.
MORNING MISERY
IF I COULD ONLY EAT THE THINGS I LIKE, AND HAVE NO FEAR
THAT'S JUST WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO, AND ALKALIZE, MY DEAR.
SOUR STOMACH
Be Wise— Alkalize
Alka-Seltzer
Alka-Seltzer Makes a sparkling alkalizing solution containing an analgesic (acetyl salicylate). You drink it and it gives prompt, pleasant relief for Headaches, Sour Stomach, Distress after Meals, Colds and other minor Aches and Pains
Alkalize with Alka-Seltzer
AT ALL DRUGGISTS 30c-60c SLIGHTLY MORE IN CANADA

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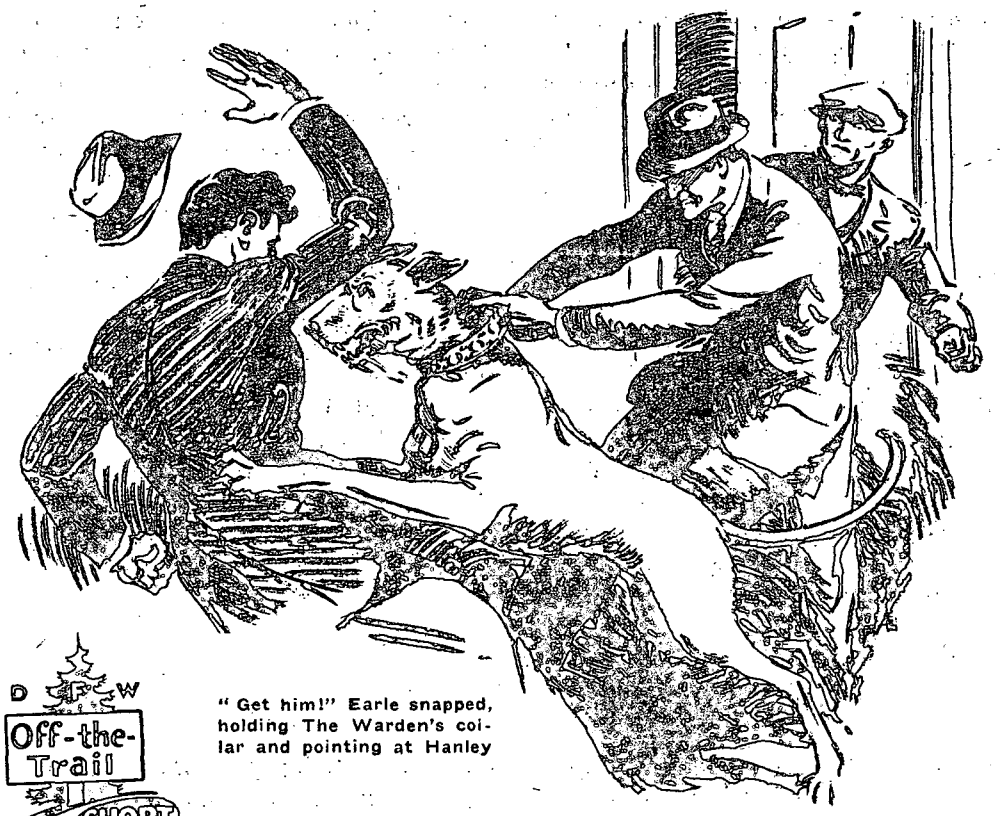

"Get him!" Earle snapped, holding The Warden's collar and pointing at Hanley

Off-the-Trail SHORT

Nuts About Mutts

By Hugh B. Cave

Detective Hanley Couldn't Explain How He Felt When Monica Lane Asked: "Me—or Those Dogs of Yours?"

POOCH HANLEY toted his six-foot frame into Police Headquarters that morning as though the soles of his size twelve shoes were loaded with cement. He felt low and looked it. He snarled at seven policemen, one after another, and tramped into the office of his boss, and saw a little white pup tied in the back room.

"That thing," said a policeman, discovering him there, "was left by young Tommy Smith. Found it in an alley, he said, and brought it here to make you a present of it." The policeman's tone changed, softened. "Say, Hanley, are you still chinning yourself on gutters? Didn't you hear from that girl of yours even yet?"

"Not even yet," Pooch Hanley replied dully, leaning to pat the pup. "I

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guess she — well, maybe — aw, skip it."

The pup was about the size of Hanley's fist and had eyes like shoe-buttons. Hanley liked pups, little ones, big ones, thin ones, fat ones, pups of any shape, color or size, pedigreed or otherwise. He had been known to buy them by the windowful, at pet shops. He had adopted dozens of them. He spent more on dog-food than on food for Pooch Hanley's stomach. His bachelor bungalow, overlooking the slope of woods that ran down into Pine Pond, sounded and frequently smelled like a kennel.

Three weeks ago Pooch Hanley's best girl had said grimly: "Apparently, Peter"—she had always refused to employ the name used by his other associates—"apparently you like dogs much better than you do me. Good-by!"

He hadn't heard from her since. Thick-headed, he hadn't called her until last night, and since last night he had been more than unusually low.

"You're a cute little mixture," he said to the pup.

"Hi, hey, Mr. Hanley!" said a six-teen-year-old voice from the doorway.

Hanley straightened and turned. Next to mutts and Monica Lane, he liked Tommy Smith better than anything else in the world. Tommy emptied waste-baskets in a law office up the street and haunted Headquarters because he had overwhelming ambitions to become a detective — like Pooch Hanley.

He was thin and red-haired. He had freckles and a grin and bad teeth. All last year he had saved the dimes tossed to him by Hanley for running errands and at Christmas he had spent the hoarded sum on a flop-eared cocker spaniel with feet like paddles, and left the spaniel in a basket on Hanley's doorsill.

Pooch Hanley was Tommy Smith's ideal, for whom dying would be a privilege.

"Thanks for the mutt, Tommy, my lad," Hanley said.

Tommy's eyes brimmed with eagerness. "You like him, Mr. Hanley? Honest? Gee, that's great!"

Hanley smiled, but the smile faded when he thought again of his girl. He hadn't seen Monica Lane in a long while. He had a promotion to tell her about, and a lot of other things to say to her, including, maybe, an apology, if he could get it out. But last night's phone call to Monica's apartment had drawn the news that she had moved. Where, he had been unable to find out.

"I'm a mugg, Tommy," he said. Talking to Tommy was a habit. Other men talked to themselves because they had no Tommy to listen to them. "I'm low as a snake's hips, Tommy."

Tommy was silent. He was always silent, and almost never grinned, when Pooch Hanley began talking at him. He wasn't supposed to answer.

"She's moved, Tommy, and I can't find out where. I guess she's through with me for good, this time. Must have got herself a job, too . . . she was out of work last time I saw her. I'm a detective, Tommy, and I can't find the girl I'm crazy about, even. A swell detective . . . yeah! Maybe she hasn't got a job. Maybe she's broke, hungry . . ."

Tommy broke the rules by answering. "You want to find her real bad, Mr. Hanley? Huh?"

"You said it."

"Sure you do, Mr. Hanley. It's written all over you. Well, gee, maybe we can do something about that. I sure think maybe we can!"

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"What are you driving at?"

"Nothing, Mr. Hanley." Tommy's grin used up the whole of his face. "But I'll have some news for you tomorrow—you wait and see!"

He was over the threshold before Pooch Hanley could stop him. Hanley, alone again, sighed and stared at the mutt.

With no work to do, he spent the rest of the day teaching the mutt to sit up and bark, and by five o'clock the yapping had driven Headquarters nearly insane. At five, a uniformed sergeant interrupted the dog's schooling to inform Hanley that the boss, the big boss, wished him to go to the City Hospital.

"A man has been shot," the sergeant said.

Hanley went to the City Hospital. It was routine stuff and he was too low to care. Tile floors, white walls and hospital odors made no more impression on him than would have been made by the sounds and smells of a theater lobby. He asked questions at the desk and went upstairs again. . . .

HE rapped on a door at the end of the third-floor corridor and an attractive nurse opened it. Her clean, sweet-smelling beauty left him cold. He said, "I'm from Police Headquarters, miss," and strode toward the bed.

"He's dying," the nurse said. Her voice was tired, her eyes suspiciously moist. "The doctor was here until ten minutes ago and then—well, there's nothing we can do."

"Tough!" Hanley grunted.

"He can't talk. He was unconscious when they brought him in, and has been mumbling a lot, but it doesn't make sense. He was found on Canal Street, shot through the head . . ."

Hanley was near the bed when he stopped walking. He stood very still. His right hand went out, as if to clutch something for support, but there was nothing to clutch, and the hand remained outthrust, stiff in stifling warm air that reeked of antiseptics. His lips twitched; small muscles tightened under his ears as his teeth came together hard.

Seconds passed before he spoke or moved. Then, staggering a little, he went the rest of the way to the bed and gripped the white enameled bed-post and said hoarsely: "Tommy! Tommy, lad . . .!"

"You know him?" the nurse asked, pitying him.

He nodded. His head kept swinging up and down until he had sagged to the bed and put his big hands on the thin, white arms of the kid who had hoped to be a detective, the kid with the contagious grin and the bad teeth and the freckles.

"Who did it, Tommy?" Hanley whispered then. "Tell me, Tommy."

The kid's head was enormous with bandages, and his eyes were covered. He seemed to be in no pain, but every now and then his face twitched and his white lips parted to let out a bubbling sound. Heat crept from his sweating arms down to the palms of Hanley's hands.

"They didn't operate," the nurse said. "It wouldn't have—"

She stopped talking, because Tommy Smith's twisted mouth was beginning to mumble words.

"Sure . . . sure, Monica, I'll tell him. I'll tell him, Monica. He'll get you out of this, easy. He's the best dick in the world, Mr. Hanley is, and he'll know what to do, Monica. Sure . . . I'll tell him . . ."

"Tell me what?" Hanley inter-

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rupted hoarsely. "What, Tommy?"

The nurse put a hand on his shoulder, and the hand was cool against his neck when he jerked his head to look at her.

"He won't understand you," she whispered. "He's just raving. He's been saying the same things over and over, ever since they brought him in."

Hanley chewed his lips. The kid was mumbling again.

"I never told him you were working there, Monica. You told me not to, and I never did. He's been awful low about you, Monica . . . Listen! Let me go, you big lug! Let me go! Oh, God . . . it hoits! It . . . You got to hurry, Mr. Hanley. I . . . I never did like that oil, Monica. Oil, Mr. Hanley . . . you know . . ."

The door opened. Hanley stared with wide, dry eyes at a uniformed man who came quietly but briskly forward.

"The doctor, sir," the nurse said.

Hanley sighed, stood up. The smell of antiseptic was making him dizzy. "So long, kid," he muttered. "Thanks for the pup, kid."

Staring down at the floor, he walked out.

On the sidewalk, he leaned against the wall of the building and pushed his hands toward his pockets, in a gesture habitual with him. The hands wouldn't fit. They were clenched, knuckles lumpy and white.

His mouth worked, uttering no words, and the eyes in his square face had been granite-hard like that only once before in his thirty-one years of life—one night when a drunken sot in evening clothes had caned a whimpering frightened mongrel in front of the Stork Club.

That time, Pooch Hanley had been sued for assault and battery, and had paid out half a year's salary for damages. This time . . .

II

RETURNING to Headquarters, he sat alone in the office with the pup delivered that morning by Tommy Smith, and made out his report. It was a human document, that report, no mere statement of facts. And Hanley's voice was husky when he said to the man at the desk:

"Tommy Smith is dying at City Hospital. Dead now, most likely. He's got a mother and sister in Brooklyn. The address is on this."

He flung the report down and stumped out, walked with long, stiff strides down the street toward the Ragan Building, where Tommy had been employed by the law firm of Andrews & Bridges.

"Oil . . ." Tommy had mumbled, back there in that white, smelly room at the hospital. "Oil, Mr. Hanley, you know . . ." But Hanley didn't know.

The kid might have been putting out only meaningless words. The mention of "oil" might have meant that he'd been told to oil some typewriters or something, or get the oil changed in his boss's car.

But most of his other talk had been at least dimly coherent. It was obvious, for instance, that he'd known for some time the whereabouts of the girl Pooch Hanley loved. He had talked to her, and she had pledged him to secrecy. Then, with trouble of some sort hanging over her, she had sent Tommy with a message.

The undelivered message had probably cost Tommy his life.

"If I can find out where *she* is," Hanley muttered to himself, striding along, "I'll have the rat responsible for

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Tommy's death." Low and rasping, his words had the tone of a buzz-saw biting into steel.

He took an elevator to the fourth floor of the Ragan Building and entered the offices of Andrews & Bridges, and mumbled his name and the nature of his mission to the girl at the switchboard. A moment later he was in Harlan Andrews' private sanctum, with the door closed.

Harlan Andrews overflowed plumply around the arms of a swivel-chair and listened while Pooch Hanley talked. He had large eyes that grew larger behind rimless glasses, and limp, salmon-colored lips that came together under pressure and turned white.

"Murdered?" he said in a womanish voice. "Murdered? I don't understand . . . Lord! Why, we liked him, Mr. Hanley. We were fond of him here . . ."

"Everybody liked him," Hanley grunted. "Now listen, Mr. Andrews. The kid had something on his mind about *oil*. My guess is, he meant some deal your firm is working on. Give me a lead, and I might get somewhere."

"Oil?"

"Oil."

Andrews thought a moment, shook his head. "I'm quite certain we're handling no case that . . . For that matter, Mr. Hanley, I'm sure that Tommy knew nothing of our connections. His duties here gave him no contact." He frowned, pushed himself erect. "I'll see if Mr. Bridges can throw any light on it."

Hanley said, "Let me talk to him," and for the next fifteen minutes put questions to Andrews' partner, an athletic-looking man who referred to Tommy as "the red head" and had tears in his eyes while talking.

Hanley went out scowling. He walked back past Headquarters, took his car out of the garage, and drove to Queensberry Street, Back Bay. It occurred to him that the time he was wasting might be vitally important to the girl he was seeking, if she were in deep trouble. But until he found her, he could do nothing to help.

The janitor-manager of Monica Lane's apartment house could give him no information except that the girl had moved out, taken her few possessions in her own car, and left no forwarding address.

Hanley drove to the Back Bay Post Office. It took the Post Office officials half an hour to make sure that Monica Lane had as yet filed no new address. Frowning, Hanley walked out without thanking them.

He had two more leads. One was a Peterboro Street garage where Monica had parked her car while living at the old address. He went there. He said, "'Lo, Joe, how's everything in the Bronx?" to the short, stout man in charge.

"I wisht I knew, Mr. Hanley," Joe said, grinning. "Livin' in this punk town boins me up."

"Monica Lane's car here?"

"Yeah. Upstairs in storage."

"In storage, Joe?"

"Yeah. She brought it in here a couple weeks ago. It was boinin' lotsa erl and needed new rings, so I done a job on it, but she never come back to get it. I moved it upstairs outa the way."

Hanley groaned, climbed back into his own car and followed the last of his leads. There was a girl named Thelma Underwood—lived in West Roxbury, a good half-hour out of town. Monica and she had palled around some.

Maybe Thelma would know . . .

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HE was within half a mile of her house when he remembered what Joe had said at the garage. He took his foot off the accelerator, and the trees along the right side of the road began to sweep past more slowly and have gaps between them. The trees had been rushing along at a furious speed. Presently they were motionless.

He sat for a moment and thought of what Joe had said, and of what Tommy had said at the hospital. He turned the car around and headed back to town, driving dangerously fast.

Messing with various leads had taken a lot of time. It was after six P. M. when he got out of the elevator on the fourth floor of the Ragan Building and walked along the hall toward the offices where Tommy had worked.

He glanced at the doors of other offices in passing, and when he came to one marked *Nathaniel Earle, Attorney-at-Law,* he stopped. He stared at the door and put a hand to his face and rubbed the stubble on his chin. The hall was empty and the building was quiet except for the drone of a running elevator. Most of the tenants were through work at this hour and had left.

He stepped up to the door marked *Nathaniel Earle, Attorney-at-Law,* and knocked, then tried the knob and found the door locked. He walked back to the elevators and took the next car down, and stood for some time studying the directory in the lobby. Then he went to a phone booth.

He called Headquarters and asked for Henigan, who was a detective. He said: "Listen, Henigan. Do me a favor. Find out all you can about one Nathaniel Earle, a lawyer, who has an office in the Ragan Building. Find out where he came from, how long he's been around, where he lives, and who works for him. See you later."

He went back upstairs to the offices of Andrews & Bridges and found Andrews sitting at the switchboard. Apparently everyone else had gone home.

"Do you know the man in 413?" Hanley asked, leaning on the rail.

Andrews pulled some plugs out of the board and leaned away from the phone before answering. "Four-thirteen? Who is he?"

"Lawyer named Nathaniel Earle."

"Oh. Well, I wouldn't say I know him, Mr. Hanley. I've seen him around, but—"

"Is there any other Earle in the building?"

"I don't believe there is."

"This fellow keeps regular hours, does he?"

"I'm afraid I can't answer that. Frequently I've seen a light in his office as I've been leaving here—and I sometimes leave rather late, as tonight. But outside of that—"

Hanley said, "Thanks!" crisply, and walked out, closing the door behind him. Other questions had been gathering inside him, awaiting utterance, but he had decided against putting them forth. Harlan Andrews looked harmless, but you never could be sure.

He rapped on the door of 413 again and got no answer. For half an hour he stood within watching distance. It was Friday night and he had a week-end date to do some fishing on Cape Cod, but the thought left him cold when he remembered it. Mostly he remembered Tommy Smith and Monica Lane and a pup. The pup ought to be fed. He hoped someone at Headquarters would attend to it . . .

Waiting got on his nerves. He thought of Henigan. Henigan was a

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good guy and would surely have the low-down on Lawyer Nathaniel Earle by morning. But Pooch Hanley craved immediate action. Morning might be too late.

At seven-twenty Harlan Andrews came out of the office up the hall, peered along the corridor, closed the door behind him and walked with short, rapid steps to the elevators. Out of sight, Hanley eyed him but kept silent and did not follow.

At seven-forty the elevator rose to the fourth floor for the seventh time since the start of Hanley's vigil, and disgorged a lone passenger. Hanley could have reached out and touched the man as he strode past. Tall, swing-shouldered, well-dressed, he seemed to loaf along the corridor, but in a dozen strides his long legs had taken him to 413.

He was inside for ten minutes. When he came out and closed the door, Hanley started down the stairs.

When the man stepped from the elevator into the lobby, Pooch Hanley fell in line behind him.

The fellow took a cab. Hanley took a cab. The first cab rolled through Park Square and along Columbus Avenue and stopped before a second-class apartment house on a side-street that dead-ended against the railroad tracks. Hanley's cab stopped at the street corner, and Hanley stepped out while the man from 413 was climbing the apartment house steps.

"Thanks," Hanley said to the driver. "Beat it."

He waited, kept an eye on the building. The guy might be coming right out again. When the guy didn't, Pooch Hanley became impatient, strolled up the steps and had a look at the list of tenants. Bell number four had a business card of Nathaniel Earle, Attorney-at-Law, jammed crookedly in the slot beside it.

III

POOCH HANLEY tried the door. It was locked. He thumbed the bell marked JANITOR and said into the tube: "Say—buzz the front door open for me, will you? My key's jammed in the lock." A moment later he sidled to a stop outside the door of apartment number four.

His big fist rose, hung at face-level for an instant, then made contact. The door opened. The tall, swing-shouldered man from 413 of the Ragan Building scowled at Hanley and said: "Yes? What is it?"

"I'm the law," Hanley declared.

The man stepped back. He had small dark eyes and they remained open, staring, but seemed to shrink. His pointed chin was like the trade-mark of a popular V-eight. The door closed behind Hanley and Hanley leaned against against it, hands in his coat pockets, legs wide apart.

"You're Nathaniel Earle?"

"I am."

"Got an office in the Ragan Building, haven't you?"

"I have." Earle's V-eight chin came out and his teeth clicked. "See here, whoever you are, I want to know what right you have—"

"I know my rights."

"And so do I. Perhaps better than you think. No man breaks into my home without the proper authority; do you understand? Get out, or I—"

"Just a minute, Mr. Earle," Pooch Hanley countered softly. He was thinking of Tommy Smith lying on the bed in that hospital room, and he had ideas concerning the man standing within arm's reach of him, and his big hands were itching to clamp around

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that long, thin neck. Pooch Hanley had a temper, a notorious one, and it was climbing now, and he was having trouble controlling it.

"All I want, Mr. Earle," he said grimly, "is the answer to one question. I'll ask it, you answer it—see? Now listen. A girl named Monica Lane worked for you in your office at the Ragan Building. Where is she?"

Nathaniel Earle was evidently not new at the law business. He knew his rights. He snapped angrily, "I told you to get out!" and strode toward a telephone.

Pooch Hanley's temper burst the stopper, and Pooch swept forward to slap aside the man's out-thrust arm.

The result was amazing—at least to Pooch Hanley. Mr. Nathaniel Earle had seemed big enough to cause a fair amount of trouble, but thin and frail, sort of, and not exactly dangerous. The fist that exploded in Pooch Hanley's snarling face astounded him more than it hurt him; but it hurt him enough to send him reeling.

He fell against a chair. His hundred-and-eighty pounds broke the cane seat of the chair and one of his elbows jammed through and stuck there. He had no chance to jerk it loose, because at that moment he had to twist his head sideways to avoid another blow of that amazing fist.

The blow drew blood from his nose and slammed him over backward. The chair went with him. Lawyer Nathaniel Earle retreated two steps, snatched a snub-nosed automatic from a table-drawer, and said nasally:

"I could kill you and a jury would call it self-defense. Make a move to get up, and I *will* kill you — with pleasure."

Hanley licked his lips and spat out blood. The snarling sounds he made seemed not to affect Nathaniel Earle in the least. Earle lifted the French phone from its cradle and placed it gently on the table. With the same hand he dialed a number with some eights or nines in it. His other hand was steady as stone holding the pistol, and his small eyes watched Hanley without once blinking.

"Get me Lefty," he said into the phone. Then: "Earle talking. Get over here to my place as fast as you can. Bring Max with you and drive the big car. We've a job to do."

HE put the phone back on its cradle, and stood between Hanley and the door. Hanley was still on the floor, with one arm still hooked in the cane seat of the overturned chair.

Earle said gently: "I wouldn't do any yelling if I were you. And I wouldn't move." The nose of the automatic made soft tapping sounds on the back of his bony hand. "Your eyes would make good targets from here."

Young Tommy Smith's head had made a good target, too, Hanley thought bitterly, but kept his peace.

It took Lefty and Max ten minutes to reach the apartment. When the knock came on the door Earle said, "All right," without turning his head. It was that kind of knock—two raps, then two more. It meant something.

Pooch Hanley eyed the two men who entered, and knew neither of them. One was thin, waspish; the other had a Jack Dempsey build with a square, flat face and no hair. Max and Lefty. He'd remember those names.

It occurred to him that in a short while his memory might not be any good to him. He stared and waited.

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He watched the gun in Earle's hand. The gun was as vigilant as a hungry snake.

"Get him out of here," Earle said bluntly. "Salt him away for safe keeping." He moved forward and gazed down into Hanley's face. "For a couple of days, meddler, you'll be cramped for room. After that, if you take things easy, you'll be back in circulation again, because a certain little deal I'm engineering will be concluded then and I'll be a long way from here. Just bear in mind, though, that I have no compunctions about killing cops—even big ones—and if you make trouble, you'll find that out."

It was not a pretty speech, and the man's ugly eyes matched it. Hanley sighed, relaxed. This was no time to begin rough-stuff, and if he blurted out what was on his mind, Earle might not like it.

When Max and Lefty hauled him to his feet, he kept his mouth shut, kept his big hands at his sides. Max frisked him.

"Get goin'," Max said.

Hanley limped to the door. Lefty went first along the hall and Hanley followed him, and Max followed Hanley. No one spoke. Hanley had a chunk of his lower lip between his teeth, and his hands kept opening and closing because they itched.

He could make a fight of it if he wanted to. He could change this slow procession into something for the newspapers. The chances were ten to one he'd regret it, but there was a slim possibility he wouldn't. Maybe he was a fool not to start something.

Maybe after they got him in that car out there, there'd never be another chance. On the other hand, they might take him to Monica.

He followed Lefty down the stairs and then marched along the sidewalk with Lefty on his right, Max on his left, toward a big sedan parked two doors down. Max opened the door and got in and said: "Come on."

Hanley got in. Lefty got in after him and closed the door and said: "Now take it easy. You get nasty and I'll pop you right on the konk, mister, and then when we get to where we're going, I'll slug you all to hell. I was a champeen fighter in college."

Hanley said: "What college?"

"Harvard," Max said, and laughed.

Hanley waited. In a few moments Mr. Nathaniel Earle came along the sidewalk and opened the door and peered in. "Everything okay?"

"Oke," Max told him.

He slid in behind the wheel and slammed the door and drove.

IV

IT was a long ride. The sedan rolled down Columbus to Stuart and along Stuart, through slow traffic, to Atlantic Avenue. Hanley gazed out the windows and twice could have yelled for help when the car stopped for signal lights. He didn't because Max moved closer to him during those waits, and Max's gun made sore spots on his ribs.

The car droned down Atlantic to a side-street in the market district and snaked into a network of short, narrow lanes, and stopped. Earle got out. "Wait here," he said.

He was gone five minutes. Returning, he said: "Okay. Bring him in." Lefty got out and Hanley followed, and Max followed Hanley.

They took him along an odorous alley cluttered with refuse and packing cases. Earle unlocked a door. Hanley followed Lefty along a dark hall that smelled of stale tobacco and beer.

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Lefty said: "Do we put him in with—?"

"No. In here." Earle kicked a door open.

"There's no lock on that door."

"Where's Tony?"

"He won't be around. He said last night he was leavin' town for a couple of days."

"Where's the Warden?" Earle said.

"Tony keeps him out back, on a chain."

"Get him."

Lefty hurried away. Max pushed Hanley into a small, bare room and followed him over the threshold. Earle waited in the corridor until Lefty came back. Hanley heard a low growling sound and heard a chain rattle and heard Earle say: "Easy now, boy, easy now. I guess Tony doesn't feed you any too often, does he?" Then Earle strode into the room and said: "See this, Mr. Law? This is the Warden."

"I'm scared to death of dogs," Hanley declared soberly.

The Warden made snarling sounds, exposing white, sharp teeth and dark gums. He had enormous shoulders and long, thick legs and was part Great Dane, part police, part something else. He had small eyes that glowed green, and a short, rough coat, and, apparently, a hair-trigger temper.

"Get him!" Earle snapped, holding the dog's collar and pointing at Hanley.

The beast lunged, growling, and Earle had to twist both hands around the heavy collar to restrain him. Even then, with the dog's forefeet leaving the ground and his big head savagely out-thrust, Earle was towed two steps toward Hanley before he could drag the brute back.

"See what I mean, Hanley?"

Hanley nodded.

"There's no lock on this door, but the Warden will be on guard outside. So long as you keep the door closed, you'll be all right. Open it, and your goose is cooked."

Earle's lips above his V-eight chin were smiling thinly. He and Max and Lefty moved toward the door. Max, afraid of the Warden, kept away from the brute's head and never stopped watching it.

The door closed. Hanley heard Earle talking to the dog, then heard footsteps, heard a door open and close not far down the hall, and was alone.

He walked to the door and put a hand on the knob. In the corridor, the Warden uttered a warning growl. Hanley drew back his hand and stood motionless, scowling. "If they'd feed you once in a while, boy, this might be easier," he said.

A sound from an adjoining room stopped him as he was about to get down on hands and knees. He turned, strode to the wall. A low voice beyond the wall was calling his name. "Peter!"

ONLY two persons in the last ten years had ever called him anything but Pooch—his mother and his girl. His mother was dead.

"Monica!" Hanley whispered. Evidently she had heard Earle talking to him, had heard him answer and recognized his voice.

"Peter, have they got you, too?"

He smiled and answered gently: "Temporarily, honey. Temporarily."

"Then you didn't get my message? Jimmy Smith didn't deliver it?"

"I got enough to get me in trouble. You alone in there?"

"Yes, Peter." Her voice was level enough, but then, she never had been an easy girl to scare. "I'm locked in.

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They're keeping me here until the deal is finished."

"What deal?"

"I worked for Earle, Peter, and found out he was a crook. He and several others are planning an enormous stock swindle — hundreds of thousands of dollars. I saw some papers and he caught me. Jimmy saw them take me away. He followed me here but couldn't get me out, couldn't open this door. I sent him to you."

"Outside of being locked up," Hanley said, "you're okay?"

"I'm all right. They're keeping me here — you, too, probably — until they can rush the deal through and skip town."

"That's what *they* think," Hanley muttered. "Keep your chin up."

He moved away from the wall. There was no sound in the corridor, none anywhere until suddenly: "Peter!"

He tiptoed back to the wall and said: "What is it?"

"Be careful of that dog! He's vicious. I saw him—saw him almost kill a man."

Hanley was eyeing a bed of burlap bags in a corner. He muttered, "Okay," and walked toward the bags and poked them with his foot, stooped and sniffed at them. They had a pungent animal odor. A dog had slept on them—not once, but often.

He threw off his coat, rolled his sleeves back, and rubbed the burlap over his arms and hands and face, then over his clothes and shoes, and over his hair. He walked to the door and dropped to his hands and knees and gently scratched the base of the door with his fingernails.

The Warden answered with an ominous growl.

Hanley put his teeth together and screwed his mouth out of shape and voiced a plaintive whine. He had known dogs all his life. He knew every word in a dog's vocabulary, and he spoke to the Warden in the Warden's own language.

The Warden stopped growling and began to whine back at him. When Hanley again scratched the door, the Warden pawed it with him.

Pooch Hanley turned the knob and opened the door two inches and waited, on his hands and knees, with heart sledging. You never could tell.

He stared at the two-inch gap, and a pair of green-glowing eyes stared back at him. The eyes came closer. Teeth gleamed beneath them, and saliva dripped from curled lips. A dog's snarl and a dog's grin look very much alike. The Warden was snarling, not grinning.

Pooch Hanley whined softly and made a purring sound and grinned. The eyes hung motionless. Hanley inched a hand forward and scratched the threshold, and the dog sniffed at his fingers. The snarl softened. Hanley uttered more purring sounds and widened his grin.

The Warden came closer, shouldered the door open, and smelled Hanley's face and hair and clothes. Hanley rolled over on his back and voiced soft yipping sounds of delight. The dog stood over him. Saliva fell on Hanley's face. He thrust up a hand and gently pushed the dog's mouth away. The dog licked his hand.

Hanley stood up. "Okay," he whispered. "Come on, Warden."

Holding the Warden's collar, he tiptoed over the threshold and along the corridor. Max and Lefty and Earle had closed the door behind them not so long ago, and he hadn't heard it open again, therefore Max and Lefty and

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Earle must still be on the other side of it. Maybe they'd left the building.

He heard voices. He pulled on the Warden's collar and stopped beside a closed door. Light filtered through the key-hole and there was no key in the slot; therefore the door was probably not locked.

The voices belonged to Lefty and Max and Nathaniel Earle.

Hanley set himself and drew the Warden up beside him on his left. His left hand gripped the dog's collar. His right closed over the knob.

He turned the knob, kicked the door open and said harshly: "Get 'em, Warden!"

V

THE three men were seated at a table littered with papers and beer bottles, in a large square room with green walls. Max looked drunk; he stared with bleary, red-rimmed eyes. Lefty reached for a gun but was not sober enough to remember in which pocket it lay. Nathaniel Earle lurched erect, amazed, and the Warden hurtled straight for Max.

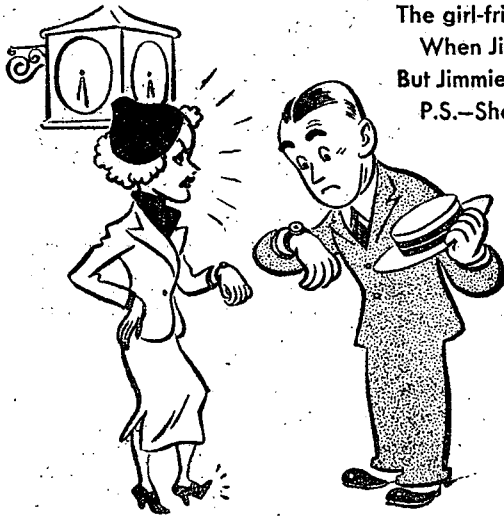
Max went over backward, with the dog snarling at his throat. Pooch Hanley scooped up a chair and went to work.

It was a very pretty scrap, and Pooch Hanley enjoyed himself. The fact that he was unarmed did not bother him; the chair made a good weapon, and the Warden was a savage ally.

He broke the chair over Nathaniel Earle's head. Earle went down. Lefty gave up groping for a gun and leaped onto the table and dove, his long arms and thin legs wrapping themselves around Hanley's big body. The Warden was taking care of Max. Hanley dropped his chair, slapped a hand back against Lefty's sleek head and gripped the man's throat.

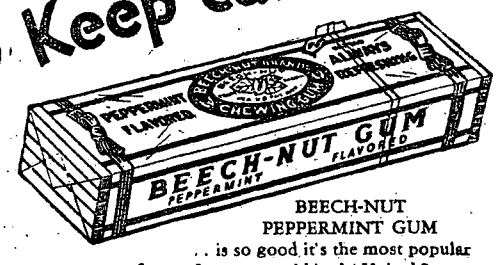
He stooped and tossed Lefty over his head. Lefty's bent back struck with a soft, spongy thud against the edge of the table, and the table moved three inches along the floor. Lefty cursed, fell in a twisted pile and began to get up.

Hanley's clenched right hand broke teeth, and Lefty staggered back across the floor, tripped over the Warden. He



The girl-friend made an awful fuss
When Jimmie turned up late,
But Jimmie brought her Beech-Nut Gum . . .
P.S.—She kept the date!

Keep calm with



BEECH-NUT
PEPPERMINT GUM
. . is so good it's the most popular flavor of any gum sold in the United States.

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sprawled to his knees. The Warden turned from Max and lunged at him.

Max rolled over four times, arms and feet and head thumping the floor, before the wall stopped him. His face and arms were torn, bleeding, and he was dazed. He tugged an automatic from his pocket as Hanley charged at him.

The gun belched twice but Max's gun hand had been torn by the Warden's fangs, and the bullets went wild. Pooch Hanley veered sideways, gripped a leg of the heavy table and dumped the table over. Max was under it.

Hanley seized an ankle, dragged the man out and swung a sledge-hammer fist. Then he turned, because Nathaniel Earle was erect, was swaying, stumbling forward. Earle looked dazed, but his eyes were clear, his right arm was hooked out for protection, and his left hand was pawing at a pocket of his coat.

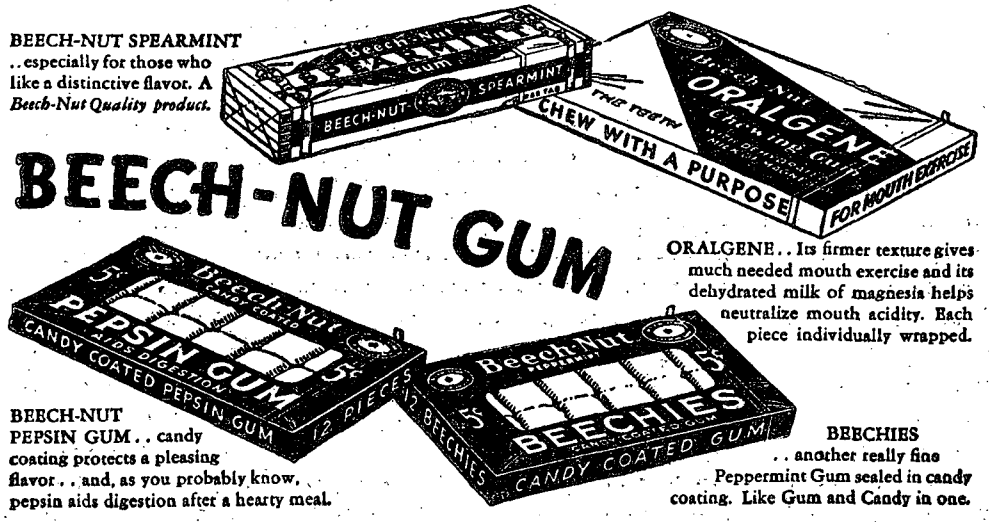
Pooch Hanley stepped up to him. The sight of blood, the sodden thud of fists on heaving flesh, the snarls of the dog, had aroused in Pooch Hanley all the love of battle for which he was famous. He was facing a good man; he had already made one mistake in judging Nathaniel Earle's capabilities, and would not again be guilty of blundering.

"Never mind the gun," Hanley snapped. "Fight!"

Nathaniel Earle stopped groping for the gun and hurled himself forward. He knew all the tricks. He came in with a knee upthrust and an elbow aimed for Hanley's eyes. The knee missed its mark; the elbow glanced off the side of Hanley's jaw, and Hanley's fist arched from close to the floor.

It was famous, that fist. It flattened the angle of Nathaniel Earle's V-eight chin and drove Earle back across the room. It drew blood from a corner of Earle's mouth and slammed him with such force against a wall that the floor and ceiling shuddered.

Three times the fist landed soddenly on Earle's face. After that, Pooch Hanley stepped back, coolly surveyed the wreckage, and said sharply: "Warden!" And as the dog slunk toward him, he stooped over Earle's bat-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..especially for those who like a distinctive flavor. A Beech-Nut Quality product.
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CHEW WITH A PURPOSE
FOR MOUTH EXERCISE
ORALGENE.. Its firmer texture gives much needed mouth exercise and its dehydrated milk of magnesia helps neutralize mouth acidity. Each piece individually wrapped.
BEECH-NUT PEPSIN GUM.. candy coating protects a pleasing flavor.. and, as you probably know, pepsin aids digestion after a hearty meal.
BEECHIES .. another really fine Peppermint Gum sealed in candy coating. Like Gum and Candy in one.

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tered body, pulled keys from the man's pocket, and said:

"You had it coming, Mr. Earle. The kid'll rest better now."

With the dog at heel, Pooch Hanley strode down the hall and unlocked the door of the room in which Monica Lane was a prisoner. The dog growled as the girl slid into Hanley's arms. Hanley put a hand down and said softly: "Shh!"

To the girl he said: "Hustle out and call Headquarters, honey. Tell them to send the wagon. I'll see you later if you'll tell me where you're living now."

SHE told him where she was living now. She kissed him. When the wagon arrived to pick up Nathaniel Earle and Max and Lefty, Pooch Hanley and the Warden rode along to Headquarters . . . and later, when Pooch Hanley and the Warden walked into the back room where a ragged little mutt was tied to a table-leg, Pooch said:

"Warden, I want you to meet a pal of mine. I never did know his name, so we'll call him Tommy. You be nice to him, or I'll slap hell out of you."

The Warden eyed Tommy and Tommy eyed the Warden. Pooch grinned. "I came mighty near messing this job up, fellers," he said. "When Tommy Smith raved about 'oil' I didn't have brains enough to figure he meant Earle. Tommy hailed from New York, fellers. And it was lucky for me I talked with Joe, at the garage, and Joe made that crack about a car 'boinin' lotsa erl.' That sort of tied things up and opened my eyes.

"As I figure it out," Hanley continued, "young Tommy Smith must have been shot as he was leaving that hideout, after trailing Monica there. They shot him to shut him up, and figured the death of a kid like that wouldn't stir much trouble. They drove to Canal Street and dumped him out. Most likely Mr. Nathaniel Earle will tell us all about it when Henigan gets through with him. . . ."

The Warden and Tommy were sniffing at each other and getting acquainted. "Hurry it up," Pooch Hanley said. "We got a date with a girl—all three of us. We gotta be goin'."

Roses and Rats

SHAKESPEARE once noted that if you would call a rose by another name, it would still smell the same. Certain types of gangsters are called hoodlums by the newspapers and what the cops call them is not fit to print. However, it may be interesting to note how the term originated.

As the cause of the whole thing, the tin-plated loving cup must be presented to one Muldoon who, aided and abetted by his gang of street ruffians, broke into the front pages with some malicious mischief. A reporter, casting about for a suitable name for the ruffians, hit upon the idea of spelling the leader's name backward. Doing that produced "noodlum." When the story went to the compositor of the paper, he accidently spelled it "hoodlum."

It is insisted by authorities that, no matter what you call that kind of rat, he smells just as bad as ever.

—*John Berry.*

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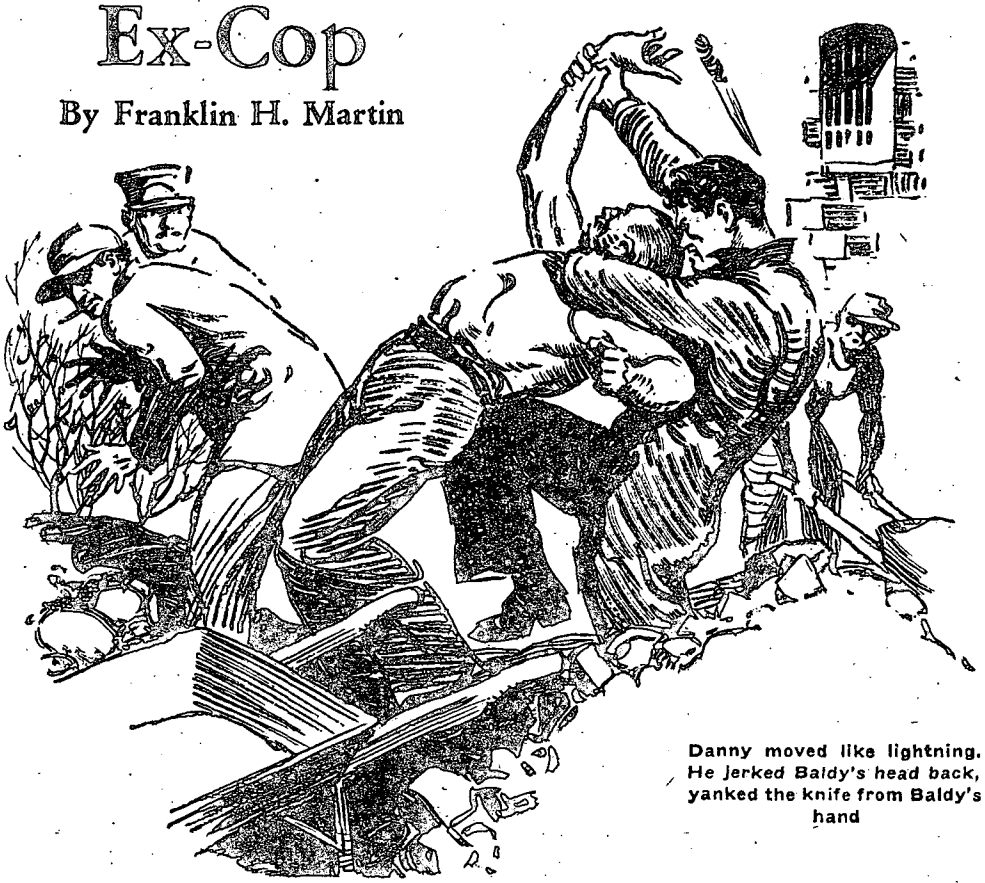
Ex-Cop

By Franklin H. Martin



Danny moved like lightning. He jerked Baldy's head back, yanked the knife from Baldy's hand

CHAPTER I

Outlaw Lawman

DETECTIVE - SERGEANT DANNY LANNON stood in the soft dirt and helped lower the casket of Police Captain Richard Manning into its grave. He released the broad web strap and stood there for a moment, looking down at the grim box. Tall, was Lannon, with a fine sweep to his shoulders and hair black as coal. His usually pleasant face was distorted by the mark of grief, but his blue eyes glinted with a dangerous, menacing light. He dropped to one knee beside the open grave and scooped up a clump of hard earth, gripped it in his big right fist. The particles of dirt fell with a drumming

Even His Mother and Sweetheart Didn't Know Why Detective Danny Lannon Started by Slugging the Commissioner in Order to End in a Cell Behind Bleak Penitentiary Walls. . . .

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sound on the bier at the bottom of the six-foot hole. Sergeant Lannon's tight lips moved.

"I promise you, Skipper," he whispered huskily. "I promise I'll get the rat who did this."

A number of police officials and politicians and prominent citizens were grouped around the grave. In the first rank was Captain Manning's widow. By her side was Rita Manning, her pretty twenty-year-old daughter. The girl was supporting the swaying, black-clad form of the older woman, adding words of comfort to the widow's prayers. On the other side of Mrs. Manning was Police Commissioner Wallace, gray and straight and austere. The commissioner's lower lip was locked between clenched teeth. Lannon looked at the other faces in the crowd of mourners. They all seemed to bear a blank expression. The young detective-sergeant throttled a wild desire to cry out and tell these clods what manner of man it was they were watching being buried in the ground. "Skipper Manning" — the grandest man and the squarest cop Lannon had ever known. . . .

Back at Headquarters, Lannon reported to Commissioner Wallace's office and stood stiffly before the desk. "You sent for me, sir?"

The commissioner looked up. "Yes, I did, Lannon. Take a chair. This is a sad day for us, Sergeant."

"Yes, sir. The saddest I've known yet."

"Captain Manning was very fond of you," the commissioner went on. "Your career was, I believe, one of the important things in his life. You were his protégé."

Danny Lannon swallowed twice before answering. "The Skipper was like a father to me. He got me to join the Force and helped me with the examinations. When I was assigned under him in the homicide division, he taught me all he'd learned in thirty-odd years. He was the finest, whitest—" Lannon checked himself. "But you know all that, sir."

"Yes, yes. He used to tell me you always knew how to use your fists but he taught you how to use your eyes and ears." Commissioner Wallace shook two lead pellets from an envelope to the top of the desk. "These are the slugs that killed Captain Manning. One pierced his heart; the other punctured his left lung — from the back, Lannon. He was shot in the back."

"Yes, sir." Lannon's lips were drawn tight against his teeth.

"I think I know the man who was behind the firing of these shots." Wallace touched one of the slugs with his finger. "But he has the best alibi in the world. He is serving a life sentence up at Stony Point."

"You mean Pusher Dorsi, sir?"

"Right." Commissioner Wallace nodded. "You know the feud that existed between Dorsi and Captain Manning. You remember how many times Manning brought Dorsi in, only to have Dorsi's lawyers and political connections get him out again. And you know how Manning finally caught him red-handed and shot the gun out of Dorsi's hand. It was too raw to throw out—but Dorsi got off with life. And he swore, prison walls or not, to get Manning."

"Yes, sir. But how could he?"

"I don't know. Dorsi is as smart as he is tough. We believe he still runs his Underworld enterprises from prison, but we cannot locate the connecting link. We have planted spies up in Stony Point, men who posed as prisoners and who tried to get Dorsi's

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confidence, but he spotted every one. One man sent up there to find out how Dorsi worked was killed in a phony accident—a heavy wrench dropped on his head in the machine shop. Dorsi has pretty much of his own way in Stony Point as far as rating with the other convicts. He's a sort of hero to them. Now it's my idea that Dorsi engineered the murder of Captain Manning and had one of his torpedoes on the outside do the job."

"Since Captain Manning was shot, sir," Lannon said, "we've had every known hoodlum in the city down to Headquarters and worked them over. We picked up every lug with a permit to carry a gun and we've put the pressure on the hock shops and fences. But we can't find any trace of the gun that fired those shots or the bird who used it. We've told our stool pigeons if they don't bring in some dope they will all be sent up for life on charges we hold against them. In other words, sir, we have used all the usual police methods in a case of this kind without results."

THE commissioner leaned forward and fixed the young detective with a level stare. "This is an unusual case, Sergeant. The motive, as I see it, is pure revenge. I think we could break it and end Dorsi's reign of the Underworld from the pen if the right man went up there and worked on him."

"Let me go up, sir," Lannon asked eagerly. "I'll make that killer talk if I have to break him up in little pieces."

"Not that way." The commissioner shook his head. "That has been tried before and Dorsi has been an iron man, proud of his toughness. I think you're the man for the job, but I don't know whether you want it or not."

"Try me, sir!"

Commissioner Wallace rolled the two lead slugs which had killed Captain Manning back and forth on the top of the desk. "The only way to enter Stony Point and get Dorsi's confidence is to be sent up for a crime. Necessarily, that would mean public disgrace, a trial, conviction, loss of your splendid police record and your citizenship. You would have to be sent up on an authentic charge — like any other criminal — or Dorsi would find you out. He has a spy system that is much better than ours. You might go up there and still fail. Don't forget, Dorsi knows you, knows you were one of Manning's aces. You'll have to make it look mighty good to fool him. Is it worth all that—plus nine or ten months in the pen—to get the man who killed Manning?"

"Yes, sir!" Lannon's reply was prompt. "I'll only tell my mother and Rita Manning—so when the heat is put on me, they'll know what's happening."

Commissioner Wallace shook his head. "You can't tell anyone, not a soul. You and I alone will know. Your mother would let her pride in you spoil it. She would tell everybody you were being sent to prison as a detective. Sooner or later she'd do that when she heard folks put you on the pan. Same with the girl. She's too fond of you to keep it a secret if she knew you were being sent away on a phony charge. She'd answer right back at anyone who taunted her about your arrest. And Dorsi's spies have a million ears. If you go for this, Lannon, you can't even tell your own mother."

The young detective rubbed his chin slowly, thoughtfully. "That would be

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pretty tough on Mom, if she thought I really was disgraced and sent to the pen on a real rap. You see, Commissioner, my old gent was a cop and a good one. Since I'm about twelve it's just been Mom and me, and I've been keeping us both fairly nice. . . . She's proud as hell of me and my record on the Force. I'm afraid the blow would be too much for her unless I told her it was a frame."

"No!" Wallace snapped. "She wouldn't be able to keep quiet when the neighbors put the blast on you. The same goes for the girl, Manning's daughter. They both have to think you've gone haywire. Lannon, it's a pretty tough thing I'm proposing to you, but it's the only way to get the man who fired these"—he nudged the slugs—"into Captain Richard Manning's back."

"It will be tough to see the look in Mom's eyes," Lannon said slowly. "But I swore at the Skipper's grave that I'd get the guy who drilled him. When do I start breaking the law, Commissioner?"

CHAPTER II

War Talk in Prison

PUSHER DORSI had a radio in his cell at Stony Point; he also had pictures on the wall, mostly funny pictures cut from magazines. Dorsi had lots of time to cut out funny pictures from the magazines because he was assistant librarian at the penitentiary. If the other convicts found books and magazines scissored so as to be illegible, they knew the Pusher had found some pictures — and said nothing about it. Pusher Dorsi's cell was next to a shower room and no convict used that shower without Dorsi's permission. Dorsi would sometimes allow a fellow convict to get himself all lathered up, then chase him out without letting him wash the soap off. Pusher Dorsi had a very rare sense of humor. He also had a squat, apish body and a fat, brutal face with a hanging lower lip and little greenish-black eyes that looked like peas floating in crankcase oil.

Dorsi had fifty or more convicts who would stumble over each other to run his errands and do his bidding. They reported every bit of prison gossip to him; they brought him his meals, amused and adored him and fought for the honor. Warden Fraser didn't like Dorsi's despotism, but the politicians holding the warden's job in their hands were on Dorsi's payroll. A few of the keepers and guards were on Dorsi's stooge list but most of them hated him and his power over the other inmates. They reported him regularly at first—but after a while they didn't bother.

One day, Portsmouth Hagen sidled up to where Pusher Dorsi was smoking a fifty-cent cigar in the shade of the exercise yard. "New guy just checking in, chief. An old friend of yours."

Dorsi pulled Portsmouth Hagen's head down and flipped hot cigar ashes down the back of the tattler's neck. "I got to listen to riddles, heh, dope? Who is this guy?"

"Guy name of Danny Lannon. Used to be a sergeant on the homicide squad."

"Up here on the snoop, huh?" Dorsi grated.

"No. No, he ain't. He goes off his nut and wrecks a police car and beats up three of his brother cops and finally socks the commissioner in the puss and breaks up a court room. A tough gent from what I hear."

"Yeah!" Dorsi squinted through a

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cloud of cigar smoke. "I remember Danny Lannon, all right. One of Manning's pets. A big mick with black hair. Always a little too quick with his mitts to suit some of the citizens around town. . . . So we have ex-Sergeant Lannon for a classmate! Swell! They say the guy sings pretty good. He can toss out a couple numbers for us when things gets dull."

And so Pusher Dorsi passed the word around to give the new prisoner the business. . . .

They began to work on Danny Lannon the first hour he was assigned to duty. The other convicts tripped him when he passed them; they stepped on his feet and pushed him when he was going down the narrow, winding iron staircase between the cell tiers. In the mess hall, they jarred his arm, knocked his spoon from his hand, and roughed him generally without doing anything to draw the censure of the screws. In the exercise yard or in any gathering, one after another would drive quick little sneak punches at his back or side or forearms. In the laundry, where he was assigned to work, the others flung filthy rags in his face or splashed cruelly penetrating cleaning fluid in his eyes.

The young ex-sergeant took it all as a form of initiation the first few days. Then suddenly, he got tough. In the mess-hall line, a convict took a sneak punch at him. With the speed of light, Lannon whirled, clipped the man in the chin with a hard right-hand punch. The convict went down, out cold. The guard swung his stick and Lannon saved his head by an upflung arm. As the guard lifted the bludgeon for another blow, Danny Lannon dropped him with a stiff left to his mid-section.

Whistles blared and other guards closed in. Lannon backed to the wall and put up his hands. A milling mob of convicts kept getting in the way of a concerted rush by the officers. A bell rang and steel doors clanged shut, cutting off the mess hall. The head keeper bellowed for order and made his way through the mob to where Lannon was standing at bay.

"Come with me, you!" he shouted at Lannon. "If you lift your hand once more, I'll let the boys go to work on you."

Lannon followed him peacefully enough. The other prisoners gave him plenty of room. None of them ventured close enough for a sneak punch as the guards marched him out and back to his own cell. The warden told him he had made a bad start and deprived him of all privileges for two weeks. But Dorsi's crew didn't bother him at his work after that. The ex-detective had been in the penitentiary three weeks before he caught sight of Pusher. Dorsi spent his time in the library, the yard, and in his private cell, listening to his radio. Lannon saw him once, surrounded by his satellites, in the exercise yard. Lannon kept to himself, made no effort to join the group.

EVERY visiting day, Danny Lannon's mother came up to see him. She stood there on the other side of the wire mesh and tried to smile and look brave. She looked ten years older and her eyes were filled with the misery of the world.

She'd smile and say, "It's all right, Danny boy. It will come out all right."

He'd nod grimly and answer. "Sure, Mom. Don't worry. Everything will come out all right." He wanted to yell out and say, "I'm still a cop, Mom. I'm just up here to get the man who killed Captain Manning.

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I'm not disgraced. I'm still on the job."

But he couldn't say the words that would drive that beaten, hopeless look from her gentle eyes. He could just stand there and say, "Don't worry, Mom. A year isn't so long."

And then the bell would ring and his mother would turn away, trying to keep the wadded ball of her handkerchief away from her eyes while she was still in sight of her Danny.

To the other convicts, Danny Lannon became a lone wolf. He had no friends, he spoke to no one. And they said among themselves, "Keep away from him. He's tough. He's bad news."

Dorsi heard it and he didn't like it. One really tough guy in the place was enough, and he was it. This ex-copper was crowding in on Pusher Dorsi's prior right to the title of the Meanest Man in Stony Point.

The next time Dorsi saw Lannon, off by himself in the exercise yard, he sent Portsmouth Hagen over. "Tell that Lannon guy I want him."

Portsmouth delivered the message. The young ex-detective looked at the convict through narrowed eyes. "Tell Pusher Dorsi if he wants to talk to me come over here."

"Geez!" Portsmouth Hagen's eyes popped. He ran back and delivered the message.

Dorsi's pendulous lower lip snapped up with a loud plop and his wicked little eyes gleamed. "I guess he don't know who runs this seminary yet. Maybe I better tell him."

He walked slowly toward Lannon, followed by a score of his mob. Lannon stood waiting him, arms folded, chin down, feet spread. Pusher Dorsi stopped three feet away. "What's the idea of the lone-wolf stuff, punk? Don't you know you new guys are supposed to come over and pay your respects to the Pusher?"

"Why?" Lannon demanded.

"He asks why!" Pusher Dorsi expressed mock surprise. "Because I'm the big mogul, punk. That's why. You know me: Pusher Dorsi. I had your department all balled up and stepping on its own toes. You know when Pusher Dorsi says for you to come over you better come, see?"

Danny Lannon laughed derisively. "Maybe you were a big shot to a crowd of hopped-up hoodlums at one time. But that day is gone. You're a has-been, Pusher. You never were tough enough to do anything yourself. You always sent some dirty torpedo, hopped up to the eyeballs, to do your tough work. You talk about being tough. That's a laugh!"

Pusher Dorsi's jowls quivered and his eyes were like a snake's. "Why, you punk ex-flatfoot! I've taken care of more guys with my two mitts than all the yellow coppers on the force. I'm still going strong up here, see? The sooner you get that, the better off you'll be."

"Have it your way, Pusher," Lannon told him quietly. "But lay off me. If you don't—I'm afraid I'll have to tear your heart out."

For a split second, Dorsi's body was tensed for a spring. Then he relaxed and his greenish black eyes submerged in a maze of laugh wrinkles. "The guy is a comedian! We know you sing, but we didn't know you are a comic. Pretty good, punk. . . . Only the next time Pusher Dorsi sends for you, don't clown—come, see?"

Danny Lannon made a derisive sound with his lips, known as the bird.

"Just the same," Pusher Dorsi

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warned him. "I'm putting you down as a guy who is willing to do what he's told and come when he's called, see?"

"Don't count on it, Pusher."

The mob around Pusher Dorsi began to dissolve. They straggled off, muttering. "This husky young punk called the Pusher's hand." "He looks pretty tough at that." "Yeah, used to be a dick but he was too mean for the other dicks." "I thought the Pusher was going to give him the old maroo but he just lipped out of it."

Pusher's closer lieutenants laughed. "He's got a scheme. He's always got a scheme. And when he pulls it there'll be a laugh in it—yessir, a laugh and a lesson for the punk."

As they were forming to return to their cells a convict sidled up to Lannon and said out of the side of his mouth, "A lot of us guys are with you, fella, we don't go for the Pusher's stuff, understand? Some of the best lads in the house will line up for you if you can pipe the Pusher down."

"If I need you," Lannon told him, "I'll let you know."

THAT night strange little noises echoed throughout the cell blocks of the great gray heap of stone. Staccato taps on steel bars, almost like the sound of a telegrapher's key. Thumps of a hob-nail boot heel in regular sequence against a concrete wall. Scraping noises picked up from one cell and passed on to the next. But those sounds were muted, all expertly held down to a murmur of night noises. The convicts were talking, signaling each other in their own noise code. And up and down the cold corridors, with the heavy steel bars reflecting the dim night lights, the story was passed.

"The new tough guy, Lannon, is going to buck Pusher Dorsi! He's going to set the Pusher back on his heels! He's going to organize!"

Back and forth it flew, through long hours of the endless night, repeated with comments and asides. A sort of grim election night. And all carried on with soft noises that might have been made by a horde of scampering rats.

Danny Lannon lay in his hard bunk, wide-eyed, sleepless. He heard the sounds and knew the convicts were holding a sort of meeting without leaving their cells. But he didn't know the sound code, so it meant nothing to him.

After mess the next morning, Danny lined up to march with the other men on the laundry detail. A guard told him to step out for special duty. Lannon followed the guard to the prison library. An old scholarly looking trusty was the librarian, but Pusher Dorsi seemed to be in charge. He winked at Lannon and, when the guard left, he came over and nudged him in the ribs.

"Quite a session the boys had last night, eh, Lannon?"

Lannon nodded. "Yeah. I heard them."

"I had you sent in here," Dorsi said. "I can arrange things like that in here. A hell of a lot better than working in that stinking laundry, ain't it?"

"Why did you do that, Pusher?"

"Because I want to talk to you, punk. You don't realize the set-up here. I don't rule this joint just because the other cons like the sound of my voice—nor even because the yellow monkeys are afraid of me, see?"

"No?"

"No, you thick Irish flatfoot. I got organization. I got a million bucks to spread around. I got the stuff on the right guys that gets me what I want, right when I want it, see? Now

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wouldn't you be a sucker to try and buck that set-up? Most of these lugs in here don't think. They see you make a schoolboy play out in the yard and they say, 'This Lannon has the Pusher's number.' But other guys have tried it and missed. I'm giving you this spiel, punk, because I sort of like the way you carry yourself and I wouldn't like to bear down too hard on you, see?"

"What am I supposed to do in this library detail?" Lannon asked.

Dorsi stared at him through squinted lids. "You take all them books out of them there shelves and pile them on the floor. Then you put 'em back again where they was in the first place. Get it?"

"Yeah. I get it."

The old scholarly-looking trusty in charge of the library paid them no heed. He was sitting behind a big book, smoking one of Pusher Dorsi's big fifty-cent cigars.

CHAPTER III

Queer Cache

DANNY LANNON'S mother seemed older and more listless every time she came up to see her son. Several times she began to talk of his father, dead since Danny was eleven years old. But she saw the look on Danny's face and talked of other things. Danny's father had been a credit to the Force and his family.

"Do you ever see Rita Manning?" Danny asked.

"Yes. She comes over to see me now and then. She is going with young Francis Daley. He'll be a lawyer in another month or two. Smart lad, Francis, and they say he has a future—" Once more the look in Danny's eyes halted her.

"Yeah." Danny agreed. "He's a smart lad."

"Ah, Danny boy!" Mrs. Lannon leaned toward the thick wire mesh between them. "Don't take it too hard, about Rita. She's the daughter of a hero, killed doing his duty. She couldn't be coming up here to see you—things being what they are, and all. You may never make another mistake the rest of your life, son, but they do say you're a renegade cop. And the daughter of the late Captain Richard Manning cannot overlook that. I'm talking plain, Danny, because I want you to forget Rita."

"Sure, I know, Mom. . . . It's swell to see you come up here. You're looking brand new."

Danny's mother knew she had never looked so old and forlorn and she could tell by the look in her son's eyes he could notice it. But she brushed back a few wisps of graying hair and tried a bright smile. "Sure, I'm feeling fine, Danny. And we'll be all right again when you're out of here."

As Mrs. Lannon was turning away when the clanging bell announced the end of the visitors' period, Danny pressed against the wire. "Rita, Mom. If I could just see her once—"

His mother caught her lip in her teeth and shook her head once, then hurried out.

Lannon dragged his feet on the way back to work. His wide shoulders slumped and his chin rested on his chest. The very air of the place made him gag. He hated the confinement, the menial work, the poor food and foul quarters, the company of his fellow convicts. But most of all he hated the thought that he, who should have been in line for a lieutenancy, with a proud record behind him, was serving time—a renegade cop. But it was the

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only way to get the man who drilled Captain Manning in the back. At the thought of his late chief, Lannon's jaw stiffened and his head came up.

"Learn to use your eyes and ears, Danny," Manning had told him many times. "There's always plenty of time to use your fists."

Danny got his cell mate to teach him the prison sound-code and he listened in on the nocturnal meetings and on the convicts' personal conversations and exchange of stories. He used his eyes and ears, the way the great Captain Manning had drilled him. But Pusher Dorsi's manner of operating was still as dark a mystery to him as it had been before.

The next visiting day, Danny took his place with the other convicts who expected visitors. He saw his mother, and with her was a slim lovely girl with crow-black hair and deep blue eyes. Rita Manning! Lannon blinked and wet dry lips with his tongue. For a moment he thought it was trick of imagination, but Rita was really there, standing by his mother, her hands clenched before her. She came close to the wire.

"Danny, I had to come, just once. This is the last time but I had to see you once more. . . . There will always be a spot in my heart no other man can reach. But we'll have to face it. You understand, Danny?"

Lannon nodded dumbly. His mother put a fluttering hand on Rita's arm then withdrew it uncertainly. A guard came up and spoke in a low tone to Rita and Mrs. Lannon, led them out of the visitors' room. A guard on the convicts' side of the wire poked Lannon. "Your folks are in the library. You can go in and see them there."

The ex-sergeant was mystified but he went down the corridor to the prison library. The old trusty was there and Pusher Dorsi. The Pusher was smirking at Rita. He turned his head when Lannon came in.

"I seen you talking to your girl friend," Dorsi said. "So I fixed it for her and your old lady to come in here. Any time the little lady comes up you can meet her in here." Dorsi threw one arm over Danny Lannon's shoulder and turned a loose-lipped smile on Rita. "Danny is my pal, see? I'm Pusher Dorsi, and any pal of mine gets special consideration. So when you come up and Danny ain't available just ask for me, see?"

Rita recoiled a little and her blue eyes were veiled and puzzled. She said, "Oh, thank you!"

Danny's mother twisted her gloves and looked unhappily from her boy's lean, drawn features to Pusher Dorsi's dark-jowled, evil countenance.

"Well," Danny said brusquely. "I guess the visiting time is about up."

"Don't rush 'em," Dorsi smirked. "Set down and chin a while. Nobody is gonna get tough with any visitors who come up here to see a pal of mine, see?"

Danny caught his mother's eyes and gave his head a quick, negative shake. Mrs. Lannon took Rita's hand and started toward the door. "We've a train to make. Good-bye, Danny. . . . Thank you, Mr. Dorsi."

"Any time," Dorsi leered. But he wasn't looking at Mrs. Lannon; his oily eyes were traveling up and down Rita's slender figure, coming to rest insolently on her flushed face. Then he turned his head toward Lannon.

"Ain't you gonna kiss your girl, Danny?"

Danny Lannon was stiff and white. He said, "You folks will miss your train."

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WHEN they had gone out Pusher Dorsi turned to Lannon. "What are you, a chump? You could have that broad up here any time, right in the privacy of this here room, see? Boy, is she a pip!"

"She's not coming up any more," Lannon grated.

"Say," Dorsi went on softly. "What do you want to go on working in that stinking laundry for, when I could spot you right here in the library, a gold bricking job, punk? You see how I get things I want around here."

Danny Lannon growled. "If you're such a big shot, why don't you get out of here, instead of rotting away the rest of your life?"

Pusher Dorsi laughed. "I'm doing all right. I got a soft bed and I eat better than the warden. I don't expect to spend the rest of my life here, but it's okay for a while, because it gives me privacy, see? When I am ready to apply for a parole, I will have everything set. Things are running to suit me, and when the time comes, I step out in better shape than before."

"Talk!" Lannon snorted. "Nobody would spend another hour in this lousy slime pit if they didn't have to."

"Say," Dorsi asked softly. "Would you like to crush out of here?"

"Sure I would!"

"Maybe I can fix it, Lannon."

"Shoot."

"Take it easy," Dorsi cautioned. "You got to remember when you do things in a scientific style you do not jump into them. You got to plan and scheme, see?"

"Well," Lannon told him. "Don't plan anything on my account. When I get ready to crush out of here, I'll figure it out for myself. I won't ask you for help, Pusher."

"Still the lone wolf, eh, punk?"

"That's right."

A seething unrest pervaded the atmosphere of Stony Point Penitentiary. It rose and fell like the tides of the sea. At times it was at the boiling point; again it smouldered ominously. The convicts were ready for a demonstration, a riot. They did not like Pusher Dorsi's czar-like rule. He even exercised his authority over their simple privileges, made them show him their mail and share any extras with him.

One day in the exercise yard Lannon heard Baldy Heimert, one of Dorsi's inner circle, beefing to Portsmouth Hagen. "A guy can stand just so much, Portsmouth. A guy can stand so much, then his guts comes up and gags him. That's with me, right now. This Pusher goes too far, even for a big-shot racket boss. Whenever I get a letter from my old lady, the Pusher makes me give it to him to read first. And what gripes me is he thinks it is very funny. My old woman does not write funny letters. She is serious and tells me things are tough and maybe the kids are sick or she don't feel too good, but she says she prays for me, and stuff like that, see? Maybe she writes funny and don't spell too good but she is writing these letters for me and not for that slob Pusher Dorsi to laugh at. I can stand anything but that, Portsmouth. And if I ever get the Pusher you know why I done it."

"Take it easy, Baldy," Portsmouth soothed. "He don't mean no harm. He has just got a sense of humor, like you do not see in many guys. He ain't laughing because your old woman does not write so good. He is laughing because who would think of saying prayers every night for a monkey like you?"

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Baldy refused to be placated. "A guy can stand just so much."

A large detail of prisoners was cleaning up one corner of the yard because Dorsi had sold the warden the idea he wanted to grow flowers there. More than a score in each of three groups hauled rocks and loaded wheelbarrows with débris that was piled there. Pusher Dorsi stood by the guards, calling instructions from time to time. Danny Lannon noticed that Baldy Heimert's face wore a mean scowl and every time Dorsi spoke Baldy would growl like a dog. Baldy emptied his barrow and was walking back with it empty. He cut in back of Dorsi and, when directly behind him, dropped the handles of his wheelbarrow and leaped at the Pusher.

Danny Lannon saw the sun glint on bright metal in Baldy's raised right hand. He acted almost instinctively, as a trained cop will, and with the skill of a graduate of the Police School. His left hand jerked Baldy's neck back. His left knee was a fulcrum in Baldy's spine and his right hand yanked Baldy's knife hand back and over. A long, sharp knife fell to the ground.

"Holy cripes!" Pusher Dorsi's oily eyes were popping and his pendulous lip hung low. His loose jowls trembled. "That lug tried to knife me!"

Two guards were lifting Baldy to his feet, frisking him. One picked up the knife. "The dirty son musta made this in the machine shop."

"You stopped him from slitting my jugular vein, Lannon," Dorsi said. "I guess you must like me pretty good."

"No." Danny Lannon shook his head. "I just hate to see any guy get it in the back. If he came at you head on I wouldn't have lifted a finger. But I can't stand a guy getting it in the back."

"You're a funny guy, Lannon."

"Sure. We're all sort of funny in this place. If we aren't when we come here, we soon get that way."

"I'm going to have you assigned to the library again tomorrow, punk." Pusher Dorsi's breath was returning. "I want to chin with you about—a couple things."

Lannon grated, "Don't do me any favors." His whole purpose in getting himself confined in Stony Point was to get close to Pusher Dorsi but he knew the worst way in the world to get close to the underworld chief was to cultivate him or try to please him. Lannon knew Dorsi's type and character. The Pusher suspected anyone who tried to get friendly. The ex-detective turned and went back to work on the pile of débris they were moving.

Dorsi watched him through slitted eyes. "I can use that guy," he muttered. "Yes, sir. I can certainly use him."

THE library detail was a goldbrick assignment. Lannon reported there next day and Pusher Dorsi winked him over to a far corner. "I got a proposition for you, punk. I'll tell you why I'm offerin' you the chance. You're big and tough and young. I'm getting along, not old, see? But maybe I ain't as quick as I once was. I could use a guy like you who knows how to keep to himself. How would you like to be my bodyguard?"

"You mean here, in stir?" Lannon asked.

"We start here," Dorsi said. "But we don't wind up here. There's a couple things I want to get straight first, then I go to work on my parole. We'll go out of here together and take some of these tough babies apart."

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"What's in it for me?" Lannon demanded.

"I can fix your parole, get you out of this slime hole, and fix it so you make more money than you ever saw before in your life."

"It sounds good," Lannon said slowly. "But I'll be frank with you, Pusher. I don't want to tie up with you, because I don't trust you. That's giving it to you, fair and square."

Dorsi's lardy face was suddenly hard and his wicked little eyes glittered as he stared incredulously at the ex-detective. "You got lots of moxie, fella. If a guy is on the level with me, I won't cross him up."

"A couple of your bodyguards got it in the back," Lannon reminded him.

"Not from me, they didn't. They went lookin' for trouble—and they got it. You keep to yourself. That's what I like, a lone wolf. You never chin with the other cons. Why, I bet you don't even know the prison telegraph code, and most guys learn it the first week they are here."

"I've got nothing to say to these monkeys in here," Lannon said. "Why should I learn that hocus-pocus?"

Dorsi nodded. "That's right. That's how I had you figured. Say, how would you like to be moved to my quarters? It's more like a hotel room than a cell. I get you a good mattress, like the one I got, and we eat better than the warden. And you don't do no more hard labor. How's that for a starter?"

"Yeah?" Lannon said slowly. "And where's the catch? What do I have to do?"

"Didn't I tell you? You're my bodyguard."

Danny Lannon hesitated, eyed Dorsi narrowly, then he said, "When do I move in?"

"Right now. . . . I'll show you how the pair of us can run this seminary like it's never been run before."

A few magic words and Lannon was moved from his crowded cell block to the big airy room Dorsi occupied next to his private showers. The Underworld boss showed Lannon the place proudly, pointed out his new bed and winked. "If you need anything, just ring for room service. . . . Make yourself at home. I got to check up on some of the boys."

Dorsi went out, merely by lifting a thumb latch on the barred door, and Lannon stood there for a moment, listening to the receding footsteps. Then he turned swiftly and began a systematic search of Dorsi's personal effects. The Pusher's foot locker was padlocked but Lannon was schooled in searching for caches. He flipped back the mattress on the Pusher's bed. Beneath were box springs of an expensive make. Quickly, Lannon stood the springs up on one side. The under covering was thin and fastened on with snap catches. Lannon unsnapped one corner and felt inside. Rolled in the nearest spring was a bundle of currency; new bills of ten and twenty dollar denomination, all from two Middle Western national banks.

The ex-detective moved over to the light, stared intently at the money, then whistled. He stuffed them back where he had found them, rearranged the spring and mattress exactly as they had been before. He made sure there was no sign of his having instituted a search, then he went over and sat down on his own bunk.

"Maybe that's a plant," he told himself. "Maybe the Pusher put that there for me to find. But I'll bet a year's pay every coil in that set of springs is stuffed with that dough.

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Damn good phonys, too. These bogus engravers always miss a little on the face. . . . Nobody but a cop or a bank teller could spot that jack as queer. Come to think of it, that's where Dorsi got his nickname—the Pusher. Before he went in for big time rackets he was one of the slickest queer pushers in the country. But how the devil can he push it in here?"

CHAPTER IV

Prison Vengeance

DANNY LANNON was stretched out on his bunk in Pusher Dorsi's cell. Hands behind his head, he was staring at the ceiling with blank, unseeing eyes. The long months in Stony Point had already put their mark on him. The ruddy, outdoor glow was gone from his face and new lines were etched around his eyes and mouth; the merry sparkle had died in his blue eyes. He was beginning to look like a convict.

The Pusher was spread out on his own bunk at the far side of the cell. He was smoking an expensive cigar and reading a contraband romance in a paper cover. The Underworld chief reached under his pillow and pulled out a platinum watch.

"Six o'clock," he yawned. "Turn on the radio to Station WGNW."

Lannon got up and switched on the instrument. "Where is that station?"

"On the end of the dial," Pusher told him. "It ain't a big station but they got a program about this time I sorta like."

Lannon twisted the knob all the way over and stopped when an announcer's voice named the station. There was a short musical introduction, then the announcer came on again with a spiel about Green Park Cemetery lots.

"Is that the program you want?" Lannon demanded.

"Sure," Dorsi grinned. "It's very restful."

"Lot of noise in the transmission," Lannon said. "Maybe I can tune it clearer." He fiddled with the dials until Dorsi said:

"Leave it be. I can hear it all right."

Listening closely Lannon suddenly realized the crackling noises were not static sounds, nor were they the usual buzzes of a small station. The sounds meant something. Coming over the ether, as an undercurrent to the voice of the man selling cemetery lots, was a message in the Stony Point Penitentiary code! Lannon checked a start and threw a quick glance toward Pusher Dorsi. The mobster boss was stretched out, puffing on his cigar. He did not register any special emotion.

Lannon pieced the code message as it came over. The clicks and dots and scrapings spelled out. "Got to get Number Two soon. See papers."

Three times during the fifteen minutes program in behalf of Green Park Cemetery the same message came through. When they signed off Pusher Dorsi said, "Pick up some hot music. It's about time them lugs brought us some chow, ain't it, punk?"

Lannon nodded. "Yeah." The husky ex-detective felt his drooping spirits begin to revive. After months he had picked up the first link in the chain Dorsi used to keep control of the Underworld while still confined in jail. The message meant nothing to Lannon, but he knew now somebody in Station WGNW was sending Dorsi regular messages. Letters could be intercepted, word of mouth messages would have to pass through too many persons. So the most public method

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of transmitting word became, for Dorsi and his associates on the outside, the most private.

The code had said something about getting Number Two. Lannon could not guess who or what the number designated. Neither could he determine what was meant by the sentence, "See papers."

The simplest and most direct thought was to assume the sender of the code had meant the newspapers. Lannon watched Dorsi closely as the Underworld boss went to the library to read the day's papers. The Pusher spent some time pondering the news on page one, then he folded the paper over to page five. His puffy face did not change; no expression was registered. He just sat there and read the paper as any man might. When Dorsi had finished with the paper Lannon picked it up and scanned the news on page one. There were two crime stories, neither of which seemed to have any direct connection with Dorsi's mob as Lannon knew it. The ex-detective then checked to see what stories were carried over from the first page to page five. One was the story of a labor demonstration, the other was the news that the mayor had assigned Commissioner Wallace to work with a special prosecutor on organized rackets and vice.

This, Lannon knew, would affect Pusher Dorsi's interests directly. Assuming this to be the news the mysterious radio message had referred to, who or what was the reference to Number Two and what did the words, "Got to stop Number Two—" mean?

LANNON throttled a desire to pace furiously back and forth as he had been accustomed to do when working on a tough problem with Captain Manning, back in the happy days. With Lannon, any physical action always accelerated his mental activity. But with Dorsi sprawled out there, watching him, the ex-detective could not jump up and pace the floor. He could only toss the paper aside wearily and growl, "What the hell do you need a bodyguard in here for, Pusher? If I don't get some exercise soon I'll go nuts."

Dorsi smirked. "So it's exercise you want, huh? Well, I got a scheme that will give you plenty of exercise. How would you like it if I told you I can fix it for you to get out of here pretty soon on parole?"

"What would be in it for you?" Lannon asked.

"You'll do a little job for me. It's the beginning of a layout that will get me out of here. Once I'm out, you can be my bodyguard for more dough than you ever dreamed of. But first of all you have to do this little job."

"What is it?"

"I'll tell you before you leave. Right now we got another scheme to work. You and me don't go down to the mess hall very much. We have our chow served in my room. Well, tomorrow we eat with the other cons, see? There will be a riot and you and I will stop it before it gets too far. I'll pass the word around among the boys and tell them exactly what I want them to do."

"But why the riot?" Lannon asked. "And why do we stop it, once it's started?"

Pusher Dorsi laughed. "Once a cop, always dumb. If you help stop a riot, the warden can build it up when he recommends you to the parole board. We don't want no nonsense from them babies, see? We want your parole to go through without a hitch."

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"But you still stay here, huh?" Lannon played dumb.

"For a little while," Dorsi grinned. "Just for a little while. And when I do walk out I'll be free as a breeze."

Lannon shrugged. "Okay. If that's the way you want it."

There was an air of tense expectancy in the mess hall the following day at dinner. Convicts cast sidelong glances up and down the long tables and fumbled with their food. They threw furtive glances at the guards who walked among them, swinging their clubs. Pusher Dorsi had passed the word around telling them there would be a little fuss but they were to pipe down just as soon as Pusher and his pal, Lannon, gave the word. Pusher and Lannon were at their places at one of the long tables, each with his tin plate of rice and boiled meat and cup for coffee.

Suddenly the hum of several hundred eating men and the clank of spoons on mess plates was broken by a loud bellow. Portsmouth Hagen leaped to his feet and dashed his plate to the floor. "I ain't eatin' any more of this slop! They're feedin' us stuff like pigs wouldn't touch!"

The guard nearest him reached out an arm and pushed Portsmouth back on his bench. Another convict struck the guard on the back of the neck. Whistles shrilled. A brazen bell clanged and the steel doors shut. Convicts screamed and howled. Tin plates filled with soggy rice flew like confetti. Guards were rushed and trampled to the floor. Other guards drew their guns and bellowed for order. Fists flew and mess spoons were twisted around knotted knuckles and used like brass knuckles. Lannon kept his eyes on Pusher Dorsi, waiting for the signal. Dorsi was in the center of a group of fighting, milling convicts. Then Lannon saw Dorsi lift his right arm and bring it down with crushing force at the base of a convict's skull. And Dorsi's hand held a short length of lead pipe. The convict he struck was Baldy Heimert. Heimert slumped to the floor unheeded. Then Dorsi caught Lannon's eye and gave the signal.

Lannon climbed up on a table and whistled shrilly. "Cut it out!" he bellowed. "Pipe down! We'll all take the rap for this and what does it get us?"

Dorsi joined his plea to Lannon's. "Lay off, you guys! You can't do nothin' this way!"

The words might have lacked eloquence but Dorsi had passed the word beforehand so they had the magic effect of quieting the battling convicts. They dropped their hands, put down the wooden benches they were swinging and took their places once more beside the long tables.

From halfway across the wrecked mess hall, Pusher Dorsi winked at Lannon and grinned. Two guards and two convicts were carrying out Baldy Heimert's limp form. As they passed Danny Lannon, one of the guards said, "Baldy's sentence is finished. He's got no more troubles. He's as dead as General Grant."

Lannon looked over toward Pusher Dorsi. The mob leader was still grinning as he talked out of the corner of his mouth to a table mate. The ex-detective felt a hot wave of resentment break over him. Dorsi had given him a fancy story, when the real reason for the pseudo-riot had been to avenge Heimert's knife attack. And Lannon had let himself be a party to the frame-up.

Dorsi had settled his score with

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Baldy. Settled it by smashing his skull from behind.

CHAPTER V

The Dogs

WHEN Danny Lannon appeared before the Parole Board they questioned him, considered the warden's recommendation, and granted him a parole. Pusher Dorsi gave him a slip of paper with a name and address written on it.

"This Joe Hecker—" Dorsi pointed to the slip of paper he had just given to Lannon—"he keeps a roadstand out on Highway No. 5. He ain't got any record and the cops don't want him for anything, so he's safe. You go there and hang around until I send you word what to do. It'll be all right, Joe Hecker expects you."

The warden wished him luck and then Danny Lannon was standing outside Stony Point's grim walls, blinking in the sunlight and taking deep breaths of air. Six months in that slime hole and all he had to show for it was a slip of paper with a man's name and address on it.

The ex-detective took the bus that ran along State Highway No. 5 and dropped off about midway between Stony Point and the city, where a gasoline station and roadstand was marked with Joe Hecker's name. Behind the stand, situated some two hundred feet away on a slight rise, was a small farmhouse. A thin, wiry man with a sun-browned, gnome-like face was pumping gasoline into a car. A fat woman in a bright pink apron was passing two barbecue sandwiches through the window to the occupants of the car. Danny Lannon waited until the car pulled away, then he walked up to the wiry little man.

"You Joe Hecker?"

"Yes." Hecker bobbed his head with a quick bird-like motion. "What can I do for you?"

"My name is Lannon. I was told—"

"Yeah, I know," Hecker cut in. "You can go in and wash up and Ma will give you something to eat."

"I'm expecting a message from—"

Again Joe Hecker cut him short. "If any message comes for you, I'll see you get it."

The ex-detective roamed around the back of the roadstand, up to the little farmhouse. His air was one of unheeding restlessness but his eyes were alert for any sign that would connect this peaceful little layout with Dorsi and his murderous gang. In the rear of the house were the usual outbuildings, a barn with sagging doors, a small silo and a tool shed with a few ancient and rusty pieces of farm machinery. There was a late model sedan standing in the barn. As Lannon rounded the back corner of the barn a sudden, fierce barking greeted him. Enclosed in a heavy wire pen were two large and formidable looking German shepherd dogs. Their bodies were tense and hunched as they crowded against the wire with bared fangs.

Lannon moved closer to the wire and talked to them but the two animals snarled and lunged menacingly at the wire enclosure. The ex-detective shook his head and walked away. "Somebody taught them to be that mean," he told himself.

It was good to be out and able to walk around again after half a year in the dank confines of Stony Point. Danny Lannon wanted to stride off through the woods behind the farm buildings, breathing deep and swinging a stick in his hand. But he kept the roadstand and gasoline station in view

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by sitting on a large rock a hundred feet away. A fairly consistent line of cars rolled in off the highway for fuel or sandwiches and beer. Joe Hecker and his plump wife were kept busy, and Lannon guessed they had a fairly lucrative layout. Nothing furtive or suspicious in the actions of either of them.

About dusk, Lannon saw a familiar vehicle pull into the curved driveway in front of the roadstand. It was a light truck, painted black. It bore state license plates and Lannon knew the small lettering on the panel spelled, "Stony Point." Joe Hecker went around and examined the gauge on the gasoline tank. His wife brought out two sandwiches on paper plates and handed them to the driver and his companion. Neither man got out of the cab of the truck. Then they drove off, still chewing on their sandwiches. Lannon had watched their every move closely. They had delivered nothing to Joe Hecker or his wife. They had exchanged no conversation except to order the sandwiches.

Other cars came and went and Lannon sat on his rock and watched them. Trucks, pleasure cars, even motorcycles. None had any particular significance to the ex-detective. At sundown Joe Hecker switched on his neon lights and called to Lannon. The one time ace of the city's homicide bureau came over and Hecker handed him a piece of paper.

"Guess this is what you are waitin' for."

The paper was folded over several times. Lannon walked off a few paces and unfolded it. Scrawled in pencil was a note. It read; "Be in front of the Downtown Mission tonight at nine-thirty."

Lannon mounted one of the stools at the counter and had one of Hecker's daily specials for supper. When he had finished, he paid with a five dollar bill. Joe Hecker snapped the bill in his fingers and held it under the light for a split second before tucking it in the cash register and making change.

"Guess I'll be moving on now," Lannon said.

"Figured you would."

"This bus that passes here goes right into town, doesn't it?"

"Yep." Hecker nodded. "You can flag it down right out in front here."

Lannon got down from the stool and pocketed the change. "I think I'll walk down the road a bit and pick it up at the next stop. I need the exercise."

Joe Hecker's answer was a grunt. As Lannon turned away he noticed the clock on Hecker's wall said ten minutes to seven. It was twilight, would not be quite dark for another half hour or so. The ex-detective started down the highway in the direction of town, walking well over on the dirt shoulder to keep out of the path of the speeding traffic on the concrete. Not all of the passing vehicles had lights on although the visibility was becoming very uncertain.

Two cars were speeding along, racing almost fender to fender from the direction of town. Lannon didn't see the third car, coming from behind him, until he saw one of the racing pair stand up on his brakes and swerve behind the other. Lannon jumped, even as his head turned. A large black sedan, coming from behind, just missed him by inches as it roared by, swayed, then shot back onto the concrete. It had no lights and its license tag was too oil-smeared and dusty to be legible in the dusk.

"He didn't need all that room to

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pass those other two cars," Lannon growled. "That monkey tried to hit me on purpose."

He left the highway and struck off through the brush, turning back toward Hecker's stand. As he neared it he climbed the hill and stood watching for several minutes. He waited until he had seen Hecker and his fat pink-aproned wife. Then he went back to the barn where he had noticed the big black sedan on his first inspection of the premises. The sagging doors were unlocked. Lannon pulled them shut behind him when he went in. The radiator was warm. A lighted match showed the rear plate clear and clean but there was an oily and dust thick rag lying on the floor a few feet away.

Lannon was starting a systematic search of the car when he heard the deep savage baying of the two dogs outside in the runway. Slowly, the ex-detective slipped out of the barn and stood flat against the door in the shadow of the eaves.

A figure with a bobbing light was coming up the hill from the stand. It was Joe Hecker, carrying a lantern. As he came nearer, Lannon could see Hecker was carrying two flat cases in his other hand, each about the size of a thick book. Hecker was coming straight for the barn, so Lannon slipped around the side and waited. He could hear Hecker moving around inside, then the roadstand proprietor came out again, still carrying the lantern. He had pulled on a bulky suit of overalls. They seemed heavily padded and had rolls of padding around the throat. He had a heavy mesh wire mask on his face.

Lannon watched as Hecker shuffled clumsily in his clumsy garb over to the dogs' run. The two great beasts snarled and leaped as Hecker began to unlock the heavy gate to their enclosure. He opened the door just enough to get his hand and arm in, then flung a large piece of raw meat as far as he could from the door. The dogs whirled and leaped upon it, growling and tearing. Hecker quickly latched the door behind him and ran over to a big circular drinking pan. He pulled this aside and pawed in the dirt under it, pulled up a section of flat metal. He dumped his two cases into the hole, replaced the top and scuffed the dirt over it. Then he moved back the drinking pan, picked up his lantern and scrambled back to the gate. One of the dogs swung his body around as if to start in pursuit, then went back to the raw meat.

Hecker returned to the barn and came out minus the thickly padded suit.

"I used to think I had the makings of a detective," Lannon muttered. "But all this has got me stopped."

He took up his position halfway up the hill where he could watch the activity at the roadstand. Nothing unusual happened and the growing darkness warned Lannon it was time to go down and catch a bus if he was going to keep the rendezvous in front of the Downtown Mission at nine-thirty.

CHAPTER VI

Murder on Demand

DANNY LANNON flattened himself into a doorway that faced the Downtown Mission from across the street. A fine drizzle of rain was falling, a good excuse for Lannon to pull down the brim of his hat and turn his collar up around his ears. It was an even money bet he would be recognized by more than half the population of that section. Many times he had gone striding through the narrow twisting streets of the neigh-

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borhood to grab some wanted man who sought refuge in its old buildings that ranked the confused jumble of alleys.

Most of the residents knew him by sight. The keepers of the dingy little stores and gin mills could spot him a block away. The uniformed police and plainclothesmen could never mistake Ex-Sergeant Danny Lannon once they got a good look at him. So Lannon hugged the shadows and watched the place across the street where he was supposed to be. It was after nine-thirty and the rain was beginning to fall harder, the wind whipped it around a little. Lannon came out of the dark doorway and strolled up the street, keeping close to the buildings. Captain Manning's training had taught him that no good cop keeps a mysterious rendezvous without first casing the spot, making sure it was not a spot or a booby trap.

It was nine forty-five when Lannon crossed the street and eased into the niche of a three foot areaway next to the Downtown Mission. Figures shuffled past him, heads down against the rain. An old woman with a news and fruit stand huddled under her awning and pulled her shawl up around her scrawny throat. She kept peering across the sidewalk at Lannon's figure in the shadows, then she shaded her eyes against the glare of her torch light and made a loud hissing noise, beckoned with a talon-like finger.

Lannon looked cautiously both ways, then stepped over to the stand. The old woman leaned forward, stared at his face, then bobbed her own head like a turtle. She ducked nimbly out from behind her counter and walked around the end of the Mission building. Her hoarse voice croaked for Lannon to follow her. In the alley behind the Mission a man waited. He was bundled in a heavy trench coat, collar turned up. The hag shuffled up to him, stuck her hawk nose in his face and stared. Then she grunted and walked away. The man in the trench coat said:

"Okay, pal. This way."

Side by side they walked along the tortuous path of the alleys that formed a labyrinth for any stranger to the neighborhood. The man was as big as Lannon, even wider in his bulky coat. They didn't talk, just walked side by side in the rain until Lannon's escort suddenly laid a hand on Danny's arm and said:

"In here, pal."

He pushed open a door that was almost flush with the cobblestones of the alley. He closed the door behind them and groped for a light switch. Stairs went down at the far end of the hall and Lannon's guide motioned with a jerk of the head for the ex-detective to follow him. A room off the lower hall seemed dark until the door swung open in response to a knock. The door made a swishing noise when it opened, like the precisely fitted door of a vault. It was thick and the door frame was of steel with inch bolt holes so the room could be closed like a safe.

A man was playing solitaire at a center table. The room was brightly lighted and a pair of electric fans hummed as they stirred the air. The furniture was the type found in the lobbies of third-rate hotels, imitation-leather chairs, birch-veneer table, ornate radio and three or four big brass cuspidors. The solitaire player looked up.

Lannon's trench-coated guide said, "Hi, Milt. The boss here yet?"

Milt looked at his wrist watch and shook his head. "Not yet, Harry."

Neither paid any attention to Danny Lannon. He took off his hat and

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slapped it against his leg to shake off the rain, then he turned down his collar and looked around. "Mind if I sit down?"

"Sure, pal," Harry told him. "Make yourself comfortable. Have a cigar or a drink?"

Lannon shook his head and Harry took off his trench coat and tossed it on a chair. Then he switched on the radio and began to mix himself a drink. Milt went back to his solitaire game. The ex-detective sat back and took stock through half-closed lids. A typical underworld hide-out with two, perhaps more, secret exits. There would be canned goods enough to last four men for weeks. Somewhere on the premises there was an arsenal containing everything from brass knuckles to riot guns. There should also be a complete first-aid and emergency room where wounded members could be given treatment until they were well enough to travel or bad enough to bury.

Danny Lannon had a fair idea of the layout of hide-outs like this. He had kicked in more than one of them in search of a man who was wanted.

Milt went on with his card game. Harry stood in front of the radio and rocked back and forth on his heels and toes in time to the music. Danny Lannon relaxed and waited. In about fifteen minutes a peculiar rap sounded on the door, code initials that reminded Lannon of the Stony Point convicts' telegraph. Milt put down his cards and reached under the table. His fingers rested on a button and the big glistening bolts slid back and the door opened.

A MAN stood in the doorway, paused as if to give his entrance the proper dramatic effect. He was short and the belt of his raincoat pulled him in at the middle like an hour glass. His hat dripped rain and was turned down all around. He wore large black sun glasses and his luxuriant mustache hid his mouth and lower lip. He walked slowly into the room.

"Well, gentlemen."

Danny Lannon's eyes snapped open. "Pusher Dorsi!"

The newcomer nodded and began to take off his things. The glasses and the large bogus mustache he placed carefully in his inside pocket, the rest he flung on a chair. "Glad to see you made it all right, Lannon," he said. "We got things to do tonight. And a swell night for it."

Almost in spite of himself, Danny Lannon laughed. "I have to hand it to you, Pusher. You're supposed to be up at Stony Point behind the bars, and here you are down here directing your various interests."

Dorsi nodded, looked pleased. "Yeah. Old Mopey, the trusty, is sleeping in my cell tonight. I used to direct the boys from the Big House, but some of them didn't believe I still had the authority, so I came out and showed them. Ain't that so, boys?"

Harry and Milt answered in unison, "Yeah, boss. You sure did."

Dorsi sat down. "You boys know Danny Lannon. He used to be a cop. He's working for me now, see?"

"Once a cop, always a cop," Milt mumbled.

"No." Harry contradicted him. "The guys who once was cops and then go on the make is the toughest of all. The other cops hate them worse than a regular hoodlum and the guy who used to be a cop hates the other cops' guts. Understand?"

Milt made a derisive noise. Dorsi slapped the table. "Turn off that radio, Harry, and sit down. I got something to say to all of you."

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They pulled their chairs closer to the table and Dorsi leaned forward. "This will be your first outside job with me, Lannon. A new guy always has to prove his stuff before the other lads like him, see?"

Lannon nodded. "Then what?"

"Then we go on from there," Dorsi said. "We go ahead and mind our business. And believe me, we got business to mind. We don't bother anybody and we don't look for no trouble. But—" Dorsi's oily eyes backed into a maze of wrinkles — "but, when some monkey tries to crack down on us we got our way of taking care of him, see? It's what you might call a purely business arrangement. We are doing all right now except for a few little things. The State's Attorney ain't too tough and most of the cops know they got to mind their own business. But there's one guy who won't lay down. That guy is Commissioner Wallace. He says if he can't get action with his own uniformed force he'll ask the Governor to apply for federal aid. G-Men, comin' in here and kicking things wide open, see? So we nip this plan in the well-known bud."

Lannon said, "Oh, you do?"

"Yeah." Dorsi spoke more slowly and deliberately now. "Yeah. We take care of this guy, like we took care of others before him."

Lannon didn't answer. Milt and Harry sat there like two wooden totem poles. Dorsi's eyes shuttled from one face to the other silently. The only noise was the hum of the two electric fans. Then Harry slapped at a fly on his neck with a loud smack and the tension was broken.

"One of you lads will do the job," Dorsi said. "I'll lay it out so you can't miss. . . . Milt, let's have that deck of cards."

Dorsi picked up Milt's solitaire pack and riffled them in his fingers. "You three can cut. High man is the trigger man."

Milt nodded to Harry. "Age before beauty, fella. You cut first."

Harry grinned and reached for the pack. He drew out a card and flipped it over. It was a six. Milt mumbled under his breath, touched the deck of cards with his long slender fingers, and tossed out a three. Harry's grin faded as he strained forward to watch Lannon's draw. Danny looked at the two cards on the table, then at the pack. He cut them in half and turned up a king!

Harry thumped him on the back. "You get the job, kid."

Milt mumbled one of his unintelligible sentences and Pusher Dorsi was watching Lannon narrowly. The ex-detective looked first at one face, then another. "I don't mind about the job," he said slowly. "But I hate to be played for a sucker. All you had to do, Dorsi, was tell me I was elected. Instead of that you go to the trouble of having this snake stack a deck of cards so it will look right. What the hell kind of way is that to start in?"

Dorsi blew out a long breath, then sucked his pendulous lip back between his teeth. "You're a pip, Lannon. You really got me stopped sometimes . . . Tell you what. That cut was a phony. Okay. You can draw again, and I promise you this one will be on the level, because I'll flip 'em over myself. How's that?"

Lannon shook his head. "I'll take the job. I don't mind that. What gripes me is being pushed around by cheap card sharks. I don't see why you have a ham like this Milt around here for anyway."

Dorsi grinned. "Already you start to run things, heh, punk? Well, let's

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get this job straightened out first. For a front we got to have a woman. Not one of these mobsters' broads. We got to have one who looks like a lady. That's easy for you, Lannon."

"I don't get you, Pusher." Lannon's brow was wrinkled.

"Why, that little frail who came up to see you in Stony Point," Dorsi explained. "That tasty little dish with the big eyes, Rita Manning, ain't it? The daughter of the late Captain Richard Manning. She'll be just the one for our purpose."

Danny Lannon leaned back in his chair and stretched his long powerful arms their full length. He held that for a space of six or seven seconds, then relaxed and yawned. It just looked like a big stretch, but Pusher Dorsi was near death from two big hands around his wind pipe in those few seconds.

"That's out," Lannon drawled.

"Yeah?" Pusher Dorsi's face lumped up into an evil scowl. His eyes glittered and his sagging lower lip plopped shut. "You do the job on Commissioner Wallace, see? And this Manning frail helps you do it—understand?"

Danny Lannon looked from Harry to Milt, then back to Dorsi. Each was suddenly holding a gun, resting them on the table top, their muzzles pointed at Danny Lannon's middle. He leaned back a little and nodded.

"Go ahead and shoot, you two-bit hoodlums. But I promise you before I drop, I'll tear Pusher Dorsi's windpipe out with my two hands and ram it down his dying throat. And he knows I can do it. Don't you, Dorsi?"

Dorsi relaxed a little and backed away. "What's all this fight talk for, anyway? All we got to do is plan this little job—whether the little skirt helps you or not. That okay?"

"All right," Lannon agreed. "Spill it."

CHAPTER VII

Hostage to Hate

RITA MANNING lived with her mother on the first floor of a two-family house in the section of town occupied mostly by apartments. Captain Manning had lived on his salary but he had left them a home. The girl sat under a lamp in the living room, reading a book. Her mother was across the room, pretending to read but adoring her lovely daughter over the top of her newspaper.

The doorbell sounded and Mrs. Manning jumped. Rita folded the book in her hands and stood up.

"Who could that be, ringing the bell at this hour?" Mrs. Manning demanded. "It's almost eleven."

"I'll go and see." Rita went out into the hall, switched on the light and opened the front door. An old woman stood on the porch. Her clothes were ragged and disheveled and she clutched a dirty shawl around her head with a bony hand. She lifted the claw-like forefinger of her other hand to her lips and croaked hoarsely:

"Ss-shush!"

"What was that?" Rita stared at the old crone, frowning in wonder.

"I said *shush*," the hag repeated. "You got to be quiet about this. You can't tell nobody, not even your mother. But you got to come with me right away. He needs you. He says you got to come at once."

"Who?"

"The Lannon who used to be a cop. The big lad with the coal black hair and the blue eyes. He says you should come at once."

"Oh, dear!" Rita's hand flew to her

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lips. "Where is he? What happened?"

"You better come." The hag backed toward the steps. "He's in bad shape, and he's got to see you. But don't tell nobody. Don't tell *nobody*—or it will be too late!"

"Can you take me to him?" Rita seized the hag's arm and hurried her down the steps. "Taxi. Here. Tell the driver where to go."

The crone snuffled and wiped the side of her face with the back of one gnarled hand. "The driver of this hack knows where to go, young lady. He don't got to be told."

"Then tell him to hurry, please!"

"He'll do that, too, without bein' told."

Rita Manning rested her head against the back-seat cushion. Her eyes closed and a pulse throbbed visibly in her white throat. Her lips moved, muttering words that sounded like, "Danny, oh my own Danny . . . !"

DANNY LANNON sat on the floor of a closed-body truck. Milt squatted on one side of him, Harry on the other. Both gunmen held automatics in one hand. The driver of the light truck wore green livery and on the side of the vehicle were neatly lettered the words. HARDING—FLORISTS.

The inside of the truck was lined with riveted sheets of bullet-resisting steel. About four feet from the floor of the truck were slots that could only be opened from the inside.

Harry called to the driver, "Turn on the radio, Gus. See if the old guy has started his speech yet."

The driver worked the dial until a voice came over announcing, "This is the first public meeting of the Citizens' Crime Prevention Association. They are assembled here at Lincoln Hall and will be addressed by some of the foremost crime authorities in the country. Police Commissioner Douglas Wallace will preside as chairman and will introduce the speakers . . . ."

"He's there," Harry said.

"Pull up, Gus," Milt said. "Stop at the nearest phone booth. We got to call the boss."

"Don't get sore, Lannon, if we hold a gun on you while we make this call," Harry said. "The boss' orders."

THE light truck pulled up to the curb beside a corner drug store and the three men got out the front, past the driver. They alighted singly, with a few seconds between, so as not to give the impression of piling out. Lannon was the second. He could see the bulge in Milt's pocket as he stood on the sidewalk, waiting. He knew Harry's gun was trained on him from behind. Milt stayed close to Lannon as they went into the drug store and back to the phone booths. Harry got the number, then pulled the booth door open.

"Boss wants to talk to you, Lannon."

Lannon stepped into the booth and picked up the receiver. The two others stood close to the outside of the glass door, hands in bulging pockets. Lannon spoke into the transmitter and Pusher Dorsi's voice answered him.

"After tonight, Lannon, you'll be one of the boys, see? But anyone will tell you Pusher Dorsi don't take foolish chances. I've been watching you since the day you came up to the seminary and you looked okay to me. But there are some guys who would say I shouldn't trust you, because you were once a cop, understand?"

Dorsi's voice stopped and Lannon decided he was supposed to answer. He said, "Is that why these two mon-

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keys hold the gun on me all the time?"

"Well, yes." Dorsi's voice was soft and wheedling. "You don't mind that so long as you're on the up and up . . . Now, here's the layout. Commissioner Wallace is in charge of that Citizens' meeting at Lincoln Hall. As he comes out after the meeting Gus will jockey the truck into position at the curb. Milt will hand you a Lüger with a special sniping stock and you will draw a bead on Wallace through the slot in the side of the truck. Is that clear?"

"Okay, Pusher."

Dorsi's voice dropped to a more confidential tone. "I know you're okay, Lannon, but just to make sure, I'm holding a little friend of yours until the job is done. Little Rita Manning will be my guest until you cool off Wallace. Soon as the word comes through you got him, I'll permit this sweet little frail to return home—or to you, which ever way you and she decide, see?"

Lannon's control almost snapped. "You're a dirty liar, Dorsi. You haven't got her!"

Dorsi said, "Wait a second."

The next voice that came over was Rita's. It was troubled, anxious. "Danny, where are you? What's wrong? They told me—" The girl's voice trailed off and Dorsi's came on again. "You see, Lannon? We just want to make sure you're one of us."

Lannon's big paw clamped around the telephone box as if to tear it out in his cold fury. "Turn that girl loose, Dorsi! If you don't, I'll come back there and rip you apart with my bare hands."

Dorsi's voice made a clucking noise. "Tut-tut, Lannon! All you have to do is the job you're on, and no harm will come to her. Safe as in her own home. But, of course, if you muff the Wallace kill we'll have to hold the frail until we get you straightened out. Ain't that fair enough?"

Lannon fought to control the hate and anger in his voice. "I saved your life once, Dorsi. Up in Stony Point, when Baldy tried to knife you. For that I ask you to turn the young lady loose and never go near her again. That's fair, too, isn't it, Dorsi?"

"Sure," Dorsi's voice purred. "All you got to do is take care of Wallace, and the girl is free as the air."

Through the glass door of the booth Lannon could see Harry and Milt, standing there with their gun hands lumping their pockets, watching Lannon with cold steady eyes. He hung up quietly, took a deep breath and opened the booth door.

"Come on, you muggs," he snapped. "We got a job to do."

CHAPTER VIII

"Get Dorsi!"

A CURIOUS crowd thronged the sidewalk outside Lincoln Hall as the doors opened and audience and speakers began to file out. More gathered when photographers' flash bulbs popped. A United States Senator, the Governor, a big man from the Department of Justice, the owner and publisher of a large string of newspapers. The crowd pressed close to peer or perhaps step into range of a photograph and see themselves in the papers next day. The police kept a lane open down the center of the wide steps of Lincoln Hall and kept clearing the sidewalk before the line of taxis and private limousines.

Gus, the driver of the light truck marked with a florist's name, kept stalling around in traffic near the curb less than half a block away. Harry,

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Lannon and Milt were crouched on the floor behind him.

"If the damn rain hadn't stopped," Harry growled. "All them people wouldn't be cluttering up the joint."

"It's a good thing them yokels are there," Milt said. "Nothing helps a quick get-away like a mob in confusion."

A man, standing on the top step of the wide stone entrance, raised a camera above his head with both hands, moved it back and forth in a short arc. Gus, at the wheel of the light truck, got the signal. "Here he comes, fellas."

Gus put the car in gear and slid in between a taxi and a private limousine moving along the curb. In the back of the florist's truck Milt handed Lannon a long-nosed Lüger pistol with a shoulder stock fitted on the grip. Milt handed the gun to Lannon with the muzzle pointing out, kept his other hand on his own gun and stood so Harry could cover Lannon from the other side.

"I don't need this." Lannon snapped off the metal frame stock. The others inched close to him, their guns out of their pockets now in plain sight.

"Comin' up," Gus muttered from the driver's seat.

Lannon stood as erect as he could and lifted the metal slot covering in the side of the truck. He had to bend almost double and lean one big shoulder against the curve of the truck's top. His legs were wide-spread, knees bent, feet planted solidly.

Looking along the barrel of the gun Lannon saw Commissioner Wallace come out and stop for a moment between the broad stone columns at the entrance while the camera men snapped his picture. The ex-detective took aim and squeezed the trigger. The Electric bulb in the marquee right above Wallace's head burst and powdered Wallace's head and shoulders with glass. The crack of the shot threw the crowd into immediate confusion. As the light bulb shattered Lannon struck out with his left heel and drove a terrific kick into Gus' neck. The driver plunged over the wheel, making the light truck lurch crazily. Milt and Harry were thrown off balance for a second and Lannon turned with his two big fists swinging, the sniping gun clutched in one of them.

Harry fired, hastily at close range, and the bullet sang and moaned as it bounced off the steel walls of the truck in a dangerous ricochet. Lannon hit him a solid blow with the fist that was twice as big and hard for the gun butt gripped in it. Harry went down and Lannon leaped for Milt, kneeling on the floor with his gun raised. But Milt closed his eyes as he squeezed the trigger and Lannon slapped the point of the gunman's automatic aside even as the powder burned scorchingly along his neck.

Lannon seized Milt's neck in a vise-like grip and smashed the gun-weighted fist against the gunman's jaw. Then he jumped forward, pushed Gus' limp form off the wheel and onto the floor.

All around was a milling, bewildered mob of frightened people. They knew there was some shooting going on but they didn't know what the path of fire was or who was doing it. Police whistles blared and motor horns set up a fearful bleating as if their drivers tried to calm their nerves by making a racket. Commissioner Wallace still stood on the top of the broad steps, brushing the splintered glass from the shoulder of his coat. Alert camera men were busy again.

"Who's shooting?" A police cap-

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tain tried to find the source of the confusion.

"Some guys across the street."

Danny Lannon knew most of these officers. A year ago he could have called them to help. But not any more. He was a renegade, a cop turned mobster, and they'd empty their guns in him without provocation at the first chance. He leaped behind the wheel of the florist's truck and stepped down on the throttle. Fenders folded and bumpers cracked, tires screamed and a windshield was splintered before Lannon jockeyed the car out of the traffic tangle and into the clear. Blaring police whistles and warning shots echoed in his wake. With his foot holding the accelerator against the floor boards, Lannon made the light truck burn the wind, turned off toward the less brightly lighted treets toward the waterfront. Three blocks from Lincoln Hall he tossed Gus out. A few blocks farther on he reached back and pulled Milt's limp form up to the seat beside him, then flung him out with a heave of his one arm. Harry was moaning weakly. Lannon slowed down along the wooden pier front and dumped Harry out on the cobblestones beside a line of warehouses.

THE waterfront stretched southward, a line of poorly lighted, badly paved piers, hardly a clear right of way, certainly not a highway, but Lannon sent the light truck down its dim length as if it were a speedway. Bounding over rough spots, skidding and tipping he gained fifteen blocks toward his destination, then cut in under the shadow of a railway embankment until he was near the section he wanted. As he flashed across the dingy downtown section, only one police whistle blared at him. With a squealing of brakes he turned into the neighborhood behind the Downtown Mission and yanked the trembling florist's truck to a halt.

Quickly he paced off the alley from the corner where he and the old newsstand crone had found Harry waiting for them. He had paced it about an hour ago, when he had first gone down it with Harry. A good cop doesn't forget to do those things in uncertain territory. He counted off the paces and turned to the door that opened flush with the street. Then he pawed for the light as Harry had done. By its dim light he saw the staircase at the far end of the hall. His heavy footsteps echoed on the rickety wood as he bounded down. The barred door remained closed when he rapped. After a minute or so of futile knocking a voice greeted him from a speaking tube beside the frame.

"Who is it?"

"Milt and Harry," Lannon said. He rapped out their names in the prison code on the door, the way Dorsi had rapped out his name so Milt would open for him.

There was a short silence, then a laugh came through the speaking tube. "Milt and Harry my eye. It's you, Lannon, and we're on to you. Better take it on the lam before we get you—or the cops do."

"Where's the girl?" Lannon shouted.

The answer was a long derisive laugh. Lannon looked around helplessly. He knew these mobsters had the shrewdness of rats and were capable of employing many scientific devices for their own protection and others' destruction. But they were not real craftsmen or mechanics or engineers. Lannon remembered one hideout where the doors were bullet proof

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steel but the walls all around were simply lath and plaster. He moved along the hall, several feet from the armored door and drove the butt of the pistol they had given him against the wall. It notched out a swath of dry and crumbling plaster. Lannon went to work and soon had the old wooden lath bared in a three foot square. He poked through the inside wall in a hole big enough to see through. The room was lighted but silent. He called and got no answer. Maybe Dorsi was in there, laughing at him, waiting for him with a Tommy gun, waiting for him to break through the plaster wall so he could spray him with hot slugs.

Then again, maybe he had Rita Manning in there too!

Danny Lannon cursed deep in his throat and threw his weight against the hole he had started in the plaster wall. Laths cracked and split. Plaster rained down in lumps and clouds of powder. The second lunge of his powerful frame made a hole big enough for a man to crawl through—if he had a gun in his fist and the lust to kill or be killed in his heart. Lannon had. He plunged through the gap and whirled to face an empty room. It was furnished as before, with the center table, the chairs, fans and radio. The cards they had cut to see who would kill Commissioner Wallace were still spread out with the king Lannon had drawn on top.

A closet with a false back opened into a hall with three rooms. One was a kitchen, the other two bedrooms. The beds were disheveled, the rooms dusty and unswept. In the kitchen the floor under the sink was piled high with empty cans. The sink was heaped with coffee grounds; soiled cups and plates were stacked on the table. Lannon made a careful inspection of the walls and floors. There seemed no exit other than through the room Lannon had entered but the ex-detective's experience assured him there must be. A closer examination of the floor in front of the sink showed flat marks running out toward the center of the room, the marks several degrees cleaner than the soiled floor. Lannon seized the rim of the sink and pulled back. The sink and the section of wainscoting behind it slid forward. It was on casters. Sleeves on the pipes permitted it to move about three feet from the wall. The passageway the sliding sink revealed was the secret exit.

LANNON lighted a match and held it above his head. The passageway led into a hall with stairs going up, a duplicate of the front entrance to the hide-out. Lannon stooped and examined the floor. A small black object caught his attention. It was a girl's black kid glove. Lannon spread it out on his own broad palm and it looked very small. "That would be about the size of Rita's hand," he said. "It's probably her glove . . . She may have dropped it on purpose."

But he went carefully along the hall and up the stairs without finding anything else that Rita might have dropped to mark the trail. The upper hall opened out into the maze of alleys, a block from the place Lannon had parked the light florist's truck. The ex-detective stood there on the cobblestones of the alley. It was dark and had a dank, unsavory smell. Not long ago, Dorsi had been holding Rita in the rooms Lannon had just ransacked. Lannon had talked to them both on the phone. And it was Dorsi's voice that answered him and Dorsi's laugh that taunted him when he had tried to get in. He couldn't be far off

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by now. Maybe right in this foul and tangled maze of alleys. Lannon turned with a growl, ready to start battering down one door after another. Then he stopped and his wide shoulders hunched forward in the dark like a big beast about to spring from ambush.

Lannon realized that Dorsi, who never missed a bet, would keep Rita with him as long as possible as a hostage. He would still bargain with Lannon for the girl's life—and his own. For a long minute Lannon stood there, desperate, fight-mad. Where were Dorsi and Rita?

The roadstand! The thought came like an inspiration. The police could go through this dingy neighborhood like smoke through a rat's nest, but Joe Hecker's stand was above suspicion. Hecker had no criminal record.

Lannon started on the run for the alley where he had left the florist's truck. As soon as he started rolling he switched the radio to the familiar police call wave length. He was rocketing across town when the calls started to come in. Lannon knew what each meant. One code meant homicide, another accident, another hold-up and so on to wife-beaters and public riots. The ex-detective's big hands squeezed hard around the wheel when he heard the police announcer's voice drone out:

"Calling all cars. Stop green florist's truck with name, Harding—Florists, on the side. This is the truck involved in the shooting in front of Lincoln Hall. Special flash, Ex-Sergeant Daniel Lannon is believed to be one of the men in the truck. Lannon is a powerful man and a crack shot. Take no chances. . . ."

The message was repeated and the name on the truck spelled out. Lannon growled and jammed his foot harder on the accelerator.

"Take no chances!" Lannon knew what that meant. It meant shoot on sight.

Trucks and wagons were gathering near the section used by the market and produce men. The produce warehouses were brightly lighted. Lannon slowed down as he entered the vicinity of the night workers. A light coupé with a name of some firm dealing in cranberries stopped in the middle of a U turn to let Lannon's car pass. Lannon pulled to a halt across the right of way and leaped out. He stepped to the side of the coupé and yanked the door open. A young man, dressed in conventional market worker's garb of long white coat and straw hat out of season, stared wonderingly.

"Get out!" Lannon seized the man's arm and pulled him out.

Some of the workers around the produce sheds, seeing it, began to yell, "Fight! Hey, a fight!"

Lannon jumped into the cranberry company's coupé and went roaring off. The market people would report the theft. They would also report the thief had abandoned the much-wanted green florist's truck. But by the time that information reached the prowl cars Lannon would have a good start.

He kept the little car wide open. After midnight the traffic was not too heavy and on many of the intersections the traffic lights had ceased to blink red and green for the night. Lannon turned into Highway Five and gave the little car all it would take. There was no radio in the coupé. But Lannon didn't need one now. He knew both Dorsi's gang and the police were after him. But he had a job to do first.

Get Dorsi!

The clanging metal parts of the tortured little coupé seemed to scream it into his ears over and over again.

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Get Dorsi! Get Dorsi! Get Dorsi and make him tell where he had hidden Rita. Make him talk and tell who had killed Rita's father, Captain Manning. Dorsi was the answer to everything. Get Dorsi!

CHAPTER IX

Canine Third Degree

THE neon lights of Joe Hecker's roadstand and gasoline station glowed in the darkness straight ahead on the highway. Lannon held the little coupé in the middle of the road so its bouncing and speed bucking wouldn't throw it in the soft dirt shoulder or in the ditch. He swerved from the highway and onto Hecker's curved driveway. His brakes squealed and the locked tires dug great gouges in the gravel. Joe Hecker and his fat wife in the pink apron were behind the counter of the barbecue stand.

Lannon bounded out of the car, reached across the counter and yanked Hecker clear over on his side with a grip on Hecker's shirt front.

"Where's Dorsi?" he bellowed.

"I don't know," Hecker gasped.

"You lie, and time is short." Lannon dealt Hecker a resounding open-hand slap across the jaw. "Where is he?"

Hecker's fat wife began to yell. She picked up an iron frying pan full of hot grease and tried to hit Lannon with it. He pushed her away, using Hecker for a ward and the hot grease ran down the standkeeper's back and legs.

"Where is he?" Lannon slapped Hecker again.

Hecker screamed in pain, but repeated, "I don't know."

His wife tried again to come between them. "Stop hitting my man. Stop it! Dorsi is here, but stop beating up Joe."

Lannon released his grip on Joe Hecker's shirt front. His voice was cold and there was a savage glint in his blue eyes. "Where is he? Where is Dorsi?"

The plump woman made a half-ashamed gesture. "He's back at the barn."

Joe Hecker slumped to the ground when Lannon let go of him. He sprawled there, his face distorted with pain from Lannon's blows and his wife's hot grease. He was looking up at his plump wife accusingly. He kept saying: "Why did you tell him? Why did you tell him?"

She dropped to her knees beside him and cradled his gnome-like head in her arms, hugged him to her broad bosom.

"Keep that guy out of the way," Lannon told her. "And he won't get hurt any more." He pulled out the pistol they had given him to kill Commissioner Wallace and started up the rise behind the roadstand. He circled slightly, remembering in the dark the layout of the farm buildings he had looked over that afternoon and evening. As he neared the dark shadow of the obsolete silo the menacing growl of a dog came from the darkness straight ahead. Then another canine voice was added and the growls became a savage duo of barks.

Lannon stood still and waited. The barking subsided and a voice called, "Who is it?"

Dorsi's voice!

Lannon remained quiet, but he lifted the hand holding the gun and pointed its muzzle in the direction from which the voice came.

"Who is it?" Dorsi called from the blackness near the barn. "Is it you, Hecker?"

"Yeah." Lannon tried to imitate Joe

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Hecker's dry, clipped tones. "It's me."

A bright light suddenly flooded the area in front of the barn and Lannon dived behind the silo just as a flash stabbed the shadows and Dorsi's bullet kicked up splinters from the silo's side.

The two great shaggy dogs in the heavy wire pen set up their barking and snarling again. Each in turn hunkered back and made a vicious lunge at the wire, bounding back with the force of their own leap; fangs bared, trembling with the lust to tear and kill, they tried frantically to get through the wire.

Lannon drew a bead on the corner of the barn where Dorsi's gun flash had blinked. He fired one shot, then, without waiting for its result, ran around behind the silo and lunged across the open space to the far side of the barn. Dorsi and Lannon were on the two dark sides. The bright lights bathed the front of the old frame structure and washed back, fan-shaped, for a little distance on two sides.

LANNON inched around, keeping close to the side of the barn. There was a slight noise ahead, and the ex-detective saw the faint silhouette of Dorsi's frame limned against the reflected light from around front. Dorsi's figure twisted and Lannon bellowed: "Stick 'em up, Dorsi. I've got you covered."

Dorsi yanked his gun up, but, as he moved back he came more clearly into the area of light. Danny Lannon placed a shot between Dorsi's right wrist and elbow. The gun fell from Dorsi's hand and he sank to his knees, his good hand gripping the wounded forearm.

"I could have killed you," Lannon told him. "It would have been easier. But you've got a few things to tell me first."

Dorsi looked up and his oily eyes glowed with hate. "You lousy copper! I never did trust you. You're tough, but the toughest of them have tried to make Pusher Dorsi talk, see? They will tell you down at Headquarters that they can beat Dorsi black and blue but he won't sing. . . . I'll get this flipper fixed and fix your wagon for you before the year's out, Lannon."

Lannon stepped up and seized the front of Dorsi's coat in his big left fist. He lifted the Underworld chief to his feet with a powerful jerk, held him close and erect. "Where's the girl, Dorsi?"

Dorsi laughed. "Find out, smart guy."

Lannon smacked him across the ear with an open hand. "I'll tear you apart if you don't tell me."

The blow rocked Dorsi's head. "Go ahead and slug me, punk. The frail left my place. I don't know where she is. I let her go when you came back and hammered on the door."

"You lie!" Lannon struck him again. "I've gone through hell this last year because of you, Dorsi. That stinking prison, disgrace—all just to get you. The two of us are here alone, and I'm going to beat the almighty pulp out of you unless you talk."

Dorsi laughed again, a little weakly this time. "Nuts to you, copper."

Sweat stood out on Lannon's ruddy fate. His black hair curled with perspiration and fell over his forehead. His eyes were ice-blue and piercing. He gripped Dorsi's squirming figure. "First," he grated, "I'm going to break your arm."

Dorsi let out a scream of rage and pain as Lannon clamped down. The dogs in the pen near by took up the

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cry, made it into a hellish wail. Lannon released the pressure and dragged Dorsi to the gate of the wire enclosure.

"Maybe you won't talk for me, Pusher," he said. "But you'll talk for them. I'm throwing you in there with those crazy beasts. They'll tear you apart so you'll pray before you die that you never were born. If you talk I'll drop them. If you don't, I'll stand here and watch them tear you like so much chuck steak. I hate you plenty, Dorsi, aside from the job I'm doing. I'd enjoy watching them rip at your throat with those fangs."

"You're out of your mind," Dorsi gasped. "You can't toss me in there. Why, you're nuts. They'd tear me to shreds—"

Lannon seized him, jerked him close to the wire gate and said, "For the last time. Where is Rita Manning?"

Pusher Dorsi's pendulous lower lip flopped shut. "I knew you wouldn't toss me to no mad dogs. Nobody in the world would dare toss Pusher Dorsi to—"

Lannon jerked the gate open and sent Dorsi spinning into the enclosure. The Underworld chief landed on all fours. Two great shaggy beasts turned and fixed him with their green wolf's eyes. Fangs, long and white and sharp, unsheathed themselves as they crouched. Dorsi tried to scramble to his feet.

"Lannon! Shoot them. Don't let them get me."

"Where is the girl?"

"Oh—oh-h!" Dorsi covered his face with his arms as the first great dog leaped. The dog's fangs clamped on Dorsi's arm and tore it down. Dorsi went over on his back with the force of the animal's leap. In lunging back, the dogs leaped over him and turned, just as the second dog slashed Dorsi's leg.

"Help me!" Dorsi screamed. "Shoot them!"

"Tell me where the girl is," Lannon insisted.

It was then that Dorsi showed how he had made a little courage go a long way. The great slobbering dogs broke through his last reserve of bravado. "In the barn!" Dorsi screamed. "Upstairs in the barn. Shoot them, for the love of—"

Lannon sighted through the wire and dropped the dog that was snapping for Dorsi's throat, fangs slavering. Dorsi looked up, crazy with fear. "The other one!" he cried. "Get the other one."

"Tell me who killed Captain Manning first."

"Kill that dog!" Dorsi's voice became an hysterical wail as the second dog charged him. He tried to cover his head as the beast leaped. The animal ripped a gory strip from the shoulder that protected Dorsi's throat.

"Who killed Captain Manning?" Lannon repeated.

"I did!" Dorsi screamed, then he was being dragged into the dirt by the great savage dog.

LANNON shot the second dog through the heart and the animal died with its cruel jaws still locked around Dorsi's ankle. The ex-detective opened the gate and walked in to where Dorsi was lying. He picked the Underworld boss up like a child and carried him out into the bright light in front of the barn door.

Pusher Dorsi's oily eyes flickered open and he looked up at Lannon. "So you finally found a way to make me talk, heh, copper?"

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Lannon nodded grimly. "I'd have torn you apart myself if those dogs weren't there."

"Just to think," Dorsi's voice was thin and weak, "I paid four hundred bucks apiece for them wild dogs—and another four C's to a crazy Dutchman who taught them to hate human beings."

"Don't try to move, Dorsi," Lannon said. "You're in bad shape. I'll be right back." He darted into the barn and collided with the big sedan parked there. The light outside only sent pencils of yellow through the walls. Lannon switched on the car's headlights, and the interior of the barn stood out in the reflection.

"Rita!" Lannon called. "Are you here?"

A faint stirring came from above. Lannon found the ladder and scrambled up to what had once been the hay loft. A form was huddled on the floor in one corner and as Lannon saw it it squirmed. He was beside it on his knees. "Rita!"

Rita Manning was strongly bound with rope and a gag was thrust between her jaws and forced back into her mouth. For several seconds she could not even make a sound. Then she gasped, "Danny!" And swayed toward him limply.

"I knew I'd find you, Rita," he told her softly. "When you phoned from Dorsi's place, I almost passed out. Then, when I found your glove down there I thought I'd go out of my mind."

"My glove?" Rita repeated. "I didn't have gloves. I came just the way I am, Danny. No hat, no gloves, no bag. Just as I was when that old woman said you needed me."

"Dorsi planted the glove, I guess," Lannon said. "So I'd think you were still around there some place. Come down with me, but don't look at Dorsi as you pass him. He's not a very pretty sight."

Lannon led the girl out of the barn and past the twisted and gory form of Dorsi, lying on its side in front of the barn door. Rita shuddered and turned her head away.

At the roadstand Joe Hecker and his wife were still behind the counter, sitting with hands in laps as if waiting for Gabriel's horn.

"Can you drive a car, Rita?"

"Yes, of course, Danny."

"Then take this heap and head for the city." Danny pointed to the cranberry company's coupé. "If you see a police car, flag it and tell them the story. If you get to town first, call Commissioner Wallace and tell him Danny Lannon said the job was done."

CHAPTER X

Ex-Cop

DANNY LANNON watched the tail light of the coupé disappear up the road and then he went back up the hill toward the barn and stood over Dorsi's limp form huddled there in the light. "How you doing, Dorsi?"

Without lifting his head Dorsi snarled, "I'll live to spit on your grave, copper."

"You'll spend your last days in a real prison, Dorsi," Lannon told him. "Not some place you can have the run of, like Stony Point. What are the people going to say when they hear a man who is supposed to be doing life traded places with a trusty and rode out on a truck to commit a few felonies? Prison is a swell alibi, Dorsi. But you're all washed up now."

"Yeah?" Dorsi raised his head

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slightly. "Pusher Dorsi is never washed up as long as he can lay his hand on a cool million bucks. And if he can't—he knows where to get it."

"Where do you make that phony dough?" Lannon asked. "Up in Stony Point?"

Dorsi snorted. "I talked all I'm going to talk. Even if you brought them two dogs back to life and sicked 'em on me I wouldn't open my trap."

"What's buried in that trap in the dogs' cage?" Lannon asked. "A bale of bogus dough?"

"Nuts!" Pusher Dorsi sat up, a little wobbly but determined. "Yeah, that's the hideaway for surplus queer. Now get me to a hospital. I can't be laying around here, bleeding to death, rag-chewing with no punk cop. It's your duty as a cop to get me immediate medical aid, see?"

"Okay, Pusher," Lannon said. "We'll just borrow Joe Hecker's car and run you into the Police Infirmary."

"Let's go, then," Dorsi said. "But if you think I'm going to talk any more you and the rest of them will find out Pusher Dorsi is still the guy who won't sing."

"We've got just about all we need right now, Pusher," Lannon said. "Let's get going. . . ."

TWENTY-FOUR hours later Danny Lannon was seated at the table in the dining room of his flat. Rita Manning was helping Danny's mother with the huge steak on the broil. They talked back and forth as the women got things ready.

"But how did they make counterfeit money in prison?" Rita asked.

"Easier than it sounds," Lannon told her. "Dorsi had the run of the place and he put his own men in the prison's engraving plant and print shop as well as the photography room. They've found everything up there since Dorsi's arrest, but they can't find the plates. The plates are important. A very good job of counterfeiting that only an expert could detect." He sank back and put his hands behind his head. "Dorsi is a slick one, all right. The way he used to run that prison. . . ." Suddenly he leaped to his feet and scooped up the telephone. He dialed a number and then said:

"Chief, is that federal man there who's working on the Dorsi bogus money? He is? Tell him I just got another idea. I just remembered that Dorsi wanted a flower garden and the warden let him have it. Maybe if you dig around over by the north wall in Dorsi's flower garden you might dig up those plates you're looking for."

By the time dinner was over the Federal man called that they had found the plates just where Lannon had said, under Dorsi's pet geraniums.

"It used to puzzle me," Lannon grinned. "The way that mug used to dig in that flower bed every day. I couldn't figure it out."

The phone rang again and Mrs. Lannon waved her son back to his chair and went to answer it. She turned away from the instrument with a happy smile on her face. There was more than a suspicion of moisture in her eyes.

"It's Commissioner Wallace," she said. "And he wants to talk to *Lieutenant* Daniel Lannon."

Lannon grabbed the phone, laughing. His mother looked at her big son with admiration lighting her lined face, making it seem younger with a returned trace of the beauty once hers. Rita stood tense, hands clasped before

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her, her eyes wide as she watched Lannon's face.

DANNY LANNON turned from the phone to look at them, his mother and his girl. His grin died a little. "What's the matter? You two look so solemn."

"It's just that I'm so happy, Danny," his mother said.

"What did Commissioner Wallace say?" Rita asked quickly. "Did something happen? Did Dorsi escape? Is he loose again?"

"Nope." Lannon shook his head soberly. "Wallace says Dorsi will be well enough soon to go to the electric chair. . . . The gun he had matched with the slugs that killed your father, Rita. He did it."

"Wherever my father is now," Rita said softly, "he'll be very proud of you. He often said to me, 'If a really tough job comes along the only man I'd trust it to besides myself is young Danny Lannon.' You've vindicated his trust, Danny."

Lannon threw his big arms wide. "The two things I wanted most in my life—to live up to Skipper Manning's trust—and marry his beautiful daughter!"

A New Fake Accident Racket

"IS this long-distance? Give me Grover Hall, editor of the *Alabama Advertiser,* in Montgomery, Alabama. And reverse the charges."

In his New York "office," "Dr. Bryant" nervously awaited the making of the connection. Finally, a voice drifted over the wire announcing that the connection had been made. The "Doctor" then told Hall that one of Hall's friends had been seriously injured and that money was necessary for proper treatment. He indicated the address to which the money was to be sent.

Sometime later, Detective Dinegar hunted up the "Doctor" and found that he was a negro and that his chief claim to being a man of medicine lay in the fact that he might possibly have been given the third degree during one of his eleven previous courses in penal institutions. Dinegar promptly placed him under arrest.

Down in Alabama, Hall had become suspicious and had gotten in touch with the Department of Justice and they had notified the New York City police. Hall says that he didn't like the voice of the "Doctor."—*John Berry.*

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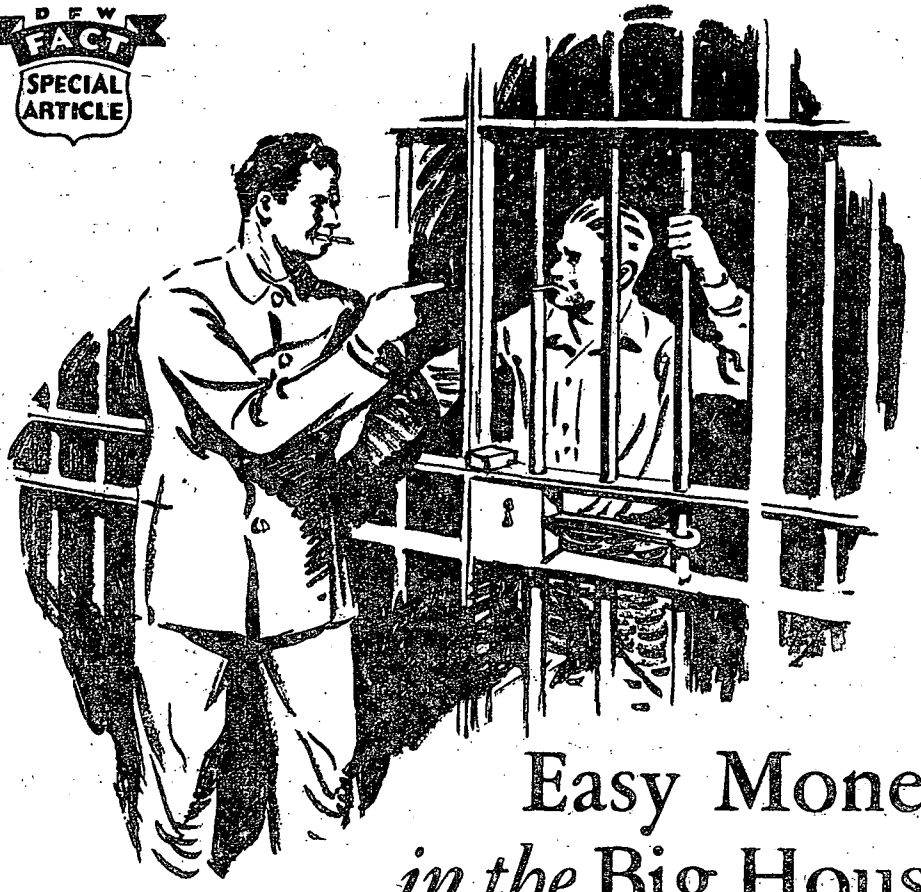

"Office jobs are scarce around here, feller"

Easy Money *in the* Big House

By Convict 12627

MOST men get into the Big House trying to get easy money, but a great many of them continue their efforts along the same lines even after they have exchanged their names for numbers. Some, through their ability, or a soft line of talk, manage to be assigned to jobs where their opportunities of making easy money are many. Others, not so fortunate, scheme to get easy money in the best way they can.

Penitentiary Walls Are No Cage for Eager Racketeers Who Play Their Easy Money Game Behind Iron Bars

There probably is not a prison in the United States where these easy money boys do not operate to a certain extent. This is not a reflection upon the honesty or sincerity of prison officials who often are so busy with administrative matters that they must necessarily place some confidence in their charges. Practically all the detail clerical work in prison is performed by convicts and this gives them an opportunity to get easy money.

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Not many years ago I served a term in a western prison where a forger entered the institution broke and was discharged three years later with a bank account of almost five thousand dollars. This was all easy money garnered a dollar or two at a time from convicts who were looking for some favor or privilege not permitted by the institution rules.

When I entered this prison I had several hundred dollars in my pocket. This, of course, was taken from me when I undressed in the deputy warden's office and placed to my credit on the institution books. The convict clerk who worked in this office smiled ingratiatingly at me when he saw this money being counted out. Having served in other prisons I expected this man to look me up sooner or later. He did—that night in my cell. I was trying to roll a cigarette when he stopped at my cell door. He placed a pack of "ready-mades" on the bars.

"Smoke those," he said. "Of course it's against the rules to have them, but I know you can keep things to yourself."

"Thanks," I replied. "I'm not very good at rolling my own. How much do I owe you?"

"Not a cent," he smiled. "Always willing to do a favor for an old-timer. By the way," he added, "what kind of work do you do?"

"Any kind of office work," I answered.

"Office jobs are scarce around here, feller," he said. "They're filled mostly by bankers and the like. I can get you a job as second laundryman for twenty-five bucks."

"From what I've seen of these Big House laundries," I remarked, "I don't know why one should want a job in one for nothing, let alone paying for it."

"Maybe you don't understand," he explained. "On this job you don't have to do any work and you have a pass that lets you go anywhere in the institution. That's what the twenty-five bucks is for. Ordinarily I get fifty for that job, but seeing that you're an old-timer I'm willing to give you a break on it."

"And if I don't take that," I asked, "where am I likely to be assigned?"

"Right on a sewing machine in that shirt factory," he answered emphatically. "And if you don't turn out enough shirts for the man you'll do plenty days in the hole on bread and water."

"I'll let you know in the morning," I said. "See me after breakfast or send for me to come to the office."

After the convict clerk had gone I turned to my cell partner who had been an interested listener. "What do you think about it?" I asked.

"If you've got the dough," he answered without hesitation, "you're foolish if you don't take him up. On that laundry job with a pass you can get almost anything you want."

THE next morning I made out a "transfer" instructing the chief clerk to transfer twenty-five dollars of my funds to the deputy's clerk. In the space provided for the reason the clerk marked "loan." An hour later I was in possession of a pass signed by the deputy warden which enabled me to go anywhere inside the prison walls.

Reporting for work at the laundry I found that while a paid guard was nominally in charge of the department, the laundry was "bossed" by a convict lifer while the guard snoozed in his chair. This lifer acquainted me with my duties which were practically nil and I began to wonder how much of the twenty-five bucks he would receive. He accompanied me on a tour of the institu-

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tion, pointing out the different shops and departments and commenting occasionally on certain prisoners who were considered " wrong " and shouldn't be associated with.

On the way back to the laundry we stopped in the bakery where, after being introduced to the convict in charge, I was given some fresh doughnuts and coffee. This, I was told, was a daily call and the doughnuts, coffee and other things would be forthcoming as long as the bakery boys received their white clothing with the necessary fine touch added to the laundering which they had grown to expect.

That noon when I prepared to join the " main line " to go to the mess hall for my beans, the lifer informed that I wasn't to go. Instead he took me through the back door of the kitchen. We sat at a counter and instead of beans I was served a delicious steak, fried potatoes, green peas, head lettuce, freshly made pie and real coffee. I began to believe that I had made a good bargain in giving the twenty-five bucks to the convict in the deputy warden's office, but I was to learn soon that I was just beginning to pay off.

As we returned to the laundry from the kitchen to spend the noon hour, a period when the rank and file of the prison population were sweltering in their small cells, the lifer produced some " ready-mades," offered me one and told me I could get all I wanted at a quarter a package. Having found my hand-rolled cigarettes difficult to make and not so pleasant to the taste I was eager to make the necessary arrangements to get a $1.50 carton of cigarettes for $3.00. This, I learned later, was a small racket of the head laundryman, but was also being practiced by other prisoners holding positions of trust.

That night I was required to go to the main mess hall and the food I found before me was such that I was in a very receptive mood the following morning for the lifer's tip as to how I could " eat as good as the warden " upon payment of fifteen dollars a month. This, I was informed, would entitle me to eat three meals a day in the kitchen and have practically anything I wanted. The initial payment was made by means of a transfer to the steward's clerk and bore the usual reason—for loan. I began to wonder if the officials ever noticed the thriving loan business being operated in the prison.

I felt that I was pretty well situated now that I had a good job and a prospect of three good meals a day as long as I could produce the necessary fifteen dollars a month, which I knew I could. I thought I was through buying " luxuries," but learned that night that I wasn't.

When I went to my cell after supper I found that I had a new cell partner. He was rough looking, unshaven, and before he spoke to me he sent a mouthful of tobacco juice on the floor in the corner of the cell. I answered his blustery " How are you, pard?" with a nod of the head. But this did not discourage him.

" I helped myself to some of your pipe tobacco, Pard," he went on. " I didn't have any chewing tobacco and you seemed to be pretty well fixed. Don't mind, do you?"

" Not at all," I lied.

DURING the course of the evening I learned that this man had been in the institution several years and, according to his statement, he had occupied almost every cell in the prison. After the lights had been turned out and his raucous snores kept me from sleeping while the odor of his unwashed feet

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almost nauseated me, I began to understand why he had lived in so many different cells. Probably no one but a man of the same type would stay in the same cell with him.

The next morning I related the experience to the lifer laundry foreman. "You have to expect to run into those kind of characters unless you've got it fixed with the con clerk in the cellhouse," he informed me, profanely and unsympathetically.

Later in the morning I was approached by this cellhouse clerk and he, of course, having planned the experience of the previous night, found me receptive to his proposition which was that for the payment of five dollars a month I would be moved from the cell and permitted to sleep on a spring cot on a landing at the head of the stairs. There I would be able to mingle with others who also were "paying off." I was so glad to get away from the creature who had disturbed my slumbers the previous night that I paid the five dollars without hesitation and would have paid much more had the "con politician" asked for it.

There were about a dozen men sleeping on this landing. Some of them were paying off and others held jobs which permitted them this privilege. They, however, probably obtained these choice jobs in the same manner I had arranged for mine. One of these, a distinguished gray-haired man wearing big square glasses attached to a long black ribbon, lost no time in inquiring about my case.

When I told him that I had pleaded guilty, his ardor was not dampened. He proceeded to tell me of all the men he had "sprung" from the Big House through extraordinary legal processes. He called upon several others there to substantiate his statements, which they did with surreptitious winks. He said he could draw up a writ which he felt sure would put me on the bricks and all he wanted was an initial payment of three cartons of cigarettes and twenty-five dollars additional the day I was released.

I had met his type before and knowing he could do no more for me than I could do for myself I refused to enter into any negotiations with him.

Ordinarily I enjoy good health while serving in the Big House, but a short time after I entered this prison I began to suffer from headaches, probably caused by eyestrain. I reported at the hospital on "sick call" one morning and stated my complaint to the doctor. Without making any examination, he said I probably was suffering from biliousness and forced me to take, under the watchful eyes of a guard, a large dose of salts.

Later in the day a convict interne looked me up at the laundry. He started off by sympathizing with me because of the inattention I had received from the doctor and ended up by offering to sell me a bottle containing fifty aspirin tablets for a carton of cigarettes, which figured out at three cents for each tablet. I bought a bottle and several others before I left the institution.

I learned later that this same man was the source of supply for all the narcotics being sold in the institution at rates which were bringing a carton of cigarettes, accepted at their usual retail value, for a quarter grain of morphine. This figured out at almost three thousand dollars for a single ounce of stuff.

As every dope fiend in the institution seemed to know that dope could be obtained from this dope fiend it was difficult for me to believe that the officials had not heard something about it.

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ONE Sunday afternoon I engaged in a crap game in the recreation yard, and finally the game had no one left in it my myself and the man who owned the dice. We were shooting "head and head" and were so intent upon the dice that we did not notice the approach of the guard. He confiscated the dice and took our numbers which meant that the following morning we would be taken before the deputy warden, who was judge and jury on all prison rule violations.

The prospect of facing the deputy warden for such a flagrant rule violation rather worried me, for I felt that it might result in my losing my job, my good meals and sleeping place, and perhaps injure my chances before the Parole Board. But I was not worried long. Shortly after supper my convict friend who had sold me my job made his appearance on the landing and sat on the side of my bed.

"I see a red tag in the office against you," he said, "for shooting craps. Do you know what that means,"

"I suppose," I answered, "it means a few days in the hole or second grade."

"More than that," he said. "Unless you can beat the rap you may lose your job and the Parole Board may give you three or six months."

"How am I going to beat it?" I inquired. "They tell me if you plead not guilty to a charge before that deputy warden he's likely to give you double punishment."

"You probably don't know," he said, "that the guy you were shooting with is one of the worst stool pigeons in the joint. He's a cinch to get stuck, but if you want to kick in with ten bucks I can fix it so you can be cleared."

I was a little skeptical about this convict clerk being able to fix this matter, but from what I had seen in the institution up to date I was inclined to believe that anything might be possible, so I told him I would give him the ten bucks if I came clear.

The following morning the stool pigeon and I were led before the deputy warden. I saw the dice lying on his desk beside the report blanks. The convict clerk stood at one side and as I looked at him he closed one eye.

"Shooting craps, eh?" The deputy warden picked up one of the reports, looked at the stool pigeon and then at a long card. "This is the fifth time you've been reported for gambling," he went on. He laid down this report and picked up mine. "Were you shooting craps?" he asked.

Before I had an opportunity to reply, the convict clerk broke in. "Deputy," he said, "Mr. Watkins, the guard who made these reports, told me this morning that he wasn't sure this man was shooting dice. He said he had been thinking it over last night, and while he knew this man was stooped down, he couldn't say positively that he was playing. This other man," he continued, nodding toward the stool pigeon, "you will recall was caught twice with crooked dice."

"Oh, yes," the deputy murmured. "I remember now. Well, we'll see how these galloping dominoes behave." He picked up the dice and rolled them on the desk. For four consecutive times they came up with craps—two aces. He placed the dice carefully at the side of his desk blotter, picked up a pen and wrote on the report blank. Turning to the stool pigeon, he said: "Five days in the hole on bread and water, reduction to third grade and three months continuance on your parole eligibility. Step outside."

When the stool pigeon had gone out of the office the deputy warden looked

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at me over his glasses. There was the flicker of a smile on his face as he spoke. "It rather looks as though you almost fell into the hands of a slicker," he said. "I'm going to give you a clean bill of health this time, but in the future you had better be more careful of your associates."

I left the office feeling quite relieved, but not until I had made out another transfer to the convict clerk. It was for ten dollars and the reason was marked "loan." As I thought of the actions of the little ivory cubes on the deputy warden's desk I wondered if it shouldn't have been marked "for substitution of dice."

ONE of the convicts in this prison had an easy money racket which was rather clever, but it was difficult for me to understand how he had succeeded in operating it so long without official intervention. I almost became one of his suckers but was saved by the timely warning of the deputy warden's clerk.

One day I received in the mail a letter written on the letterhead of a novelty company. This letter stated that the company was interested in buying two dozen ladies' beaded hand bags, an article made in the prison by a number of prisoners. As convicts do not place a high valuation on their labor, these bags, which normally sold for sums ranging upwards from fifty dollars in the outside world, could be purchased in the prison for ten to twelve dollars each.

The company writing this letter quoted an offer of twenty-five dollars each for the bags, and while the letter did not state definitely that the bags would be purchased it indicated that they would. I was about ready to close a deal with a man for two dozen bags and went to my convict friend in the deputy warden's office to arrange for the money transfer.

He explained to me that the company was non-existent and that the letters were written by a friend of the convict who was selling the bags. He said that the "company" would return the bags as being unsuited for their purpose, thus leaving the buyer of them with two dozen bags on his hands and no market for them. In this manner this scheming convict succeeded in selling practically all the bags he could obtain in the institution.

As I remained longer in this prison I learned that the operations of the easy money boys extended into the sports activities of the institution. During the summer months baseball games were held each Sunday with outside teams. The prison ball team not only was strong, but the convicts had the advantage of being familiar with the grounds which were a little difficult for an outside team unaccustomed to playing behind walls. Usually the prison team was an overwhelming favorite to win, and no convict, except some newcomer uninformed as to this situation would bet on the outside team unless he was spotted some runs.

I recall one return game between the prison team and an aggregation of Indians from a nearby reservation. Upon the occasion of their previous meeting, the convict team had won by a wide margin as they seemed to be able to hit at will. So when the return game was scheduled dozens of convicts hastened to make bets and give from two to five runs.

It is quite likely I would have been on the wrong side of this coup had it not been for a tip received from the head laundryman who told me to bet as much as I could get down and take two runs or more if I could get them. I succeeded in

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getting almost fifty dollars down on the game and as far as I could learn there probably was several thousands of dollars wagered on the game. The boys who had given the runs felt safe from the previous poor showing of the Indian team, and with the exception of a few the ones taking the runs knew that their money was safe and that the game was in the bag.

There was much betting.

For the first seven innings the game proceeded according to dope. At the end of this inning the prison team was leading by six runs and the Indian pitcher seemed to be getting wilder all the time. Had I not known that several members of the convict team had bet on the outside team taking runs I probably would have been worried, but with this knowledge I waited for the eighth inning when I had been assured things would begin to happen.

I marveled at the ingenious way the thing was arranged. The team was in charge of the prison chaplain, but he had appointed the first baseman captain and usually followed his recommendations as to choice of batteries and replacements. At the end of the seventh inning the captain held a long conference with the Chaplain. And when the eighth inning started a young rookie pitcher was put in the box for the cons. Before he had got over his stage fright the Indians, aided by some timely errors committed by the first baseman captain, had tied the score.

The young pitcher was speedily yanked from the game and replaced by the regular second string pitcher who retired the side without further scoring. In the ninth inning the convicts made an additional run tying the score and the game ended 8 to 7 in their favor which kept their record of no losses intact and enabled the easy money boys to win their wagers with the runs they had been spotted.

ANOTHER manner in which the prison hustlers garnered tobacco, prison-made curios and contraband cash in connection with ball games was through manipulation of baseball pools. These pools were made with three inning combinations, and while each pool contained 84 combinations the pay-off was but 50 to 1.

The operators of these pools, however, were not satisfied with this margin of profit. On the larger pools, those where the chances sold for a dollar and upwards, the operators retained for themselves, through dummies, the combinations containing one certain inning in which they were assured by one or more members of the convict team that a great number of scores would be made. In this manner their profit was almost one hundred per cent.

Prize fight pools also were very common in this institution, although most of them were conducted on the square. I do recall, however, one coup involving a hundred dollar wager, and as far as I know the duped convict never learned he had been gypped.

The victim of this swindle had one certain fighter of better than average ability upon whom he would wager any time, sometimes laying large odds. He was approached one day by one of the easy money boys and told that his favorite fighter was scheduled to fight the following Thursday night in a distant city. The prison confidence man exhibited a clipping containing a notice of the fight. The good fighter's opponent was an unknown, so the other convict did not hesitate in wagering one hundred dollars against forty on the man of his choice. The stakes, in contraband cash money, were placed in a third prisoner's hand,

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who, of course, was naturally a party to the play.

Thursday passed and the local papers and those from neighboring cities did not carry any mention of the outcome of the fight, and it was understood among the prison bettors that only newspaper clippings would be accepted as proof of the outcome of a fight. Several days later, however, the convict who had planned the coup and who had wagered the forty dollars sought out the stakeholder and showed him a newspaper clipping which stated that the unknown fighter had obtained a decision over the favorite.

This clipping showed a part of the top of the sheet which indicated that the newspaper had been printed in the city where the fight was supposed to have been scheduled. The fight fan who had laid the odds read the clipping with consternation plainly written on his face, but being a good sportsman he instructed the stakeholder to pay off. He was discharged from the institution a few months later, but as far as I know he never learned that both newspaper clippings had been made in the prison print shop and that the fighter of his choice did not engage in any fight on that date nor had ever fought the unknown who, according to the phony clipping, had won the fight.

A FIGHT program at the prison was arranged on each Fourth of July and always at least one of these fights was in the bag for the easy money boys. Certain convict politicians were permitted to act as seconds, and while the referee was an outside man, he usually was not interested enough in the outcome of any one of the bouts to raise any question as to the genuineness of a knock out blow when the fighter sank to the mat simulating great agony.

One of these supposedly fixed fights turned out to be a boomerang for the easy money boys and they, as their type usually do when frustrated, howled like wolves and threatened violence upon the man whom they believed had double-crossed them. Word of this fight being fixed reached the warden shortly before the program started. Being a clean type himself, he did not want to believe that one of his "boys" would enter into any such agreement. He, however, called the fighter whom he had been told was going to throw the fight to the grandstand where he was sitting.

"James," he said, "I have been told that you are going to take a dive in this fight. I don't want to believe this, but I want you to know that I have made a bet on you. I can afford to lose, but judging from your workouts I have watched I believe you can whip this man easily. I am going to watch you closely and if there is anything in this bout that looks fishy, you'll find when you appear before the Parole Board that I won't have anything to say in your favor. That's all. Now go ahead out there and let your conscience be your guide."

The prisoner thanked the warden, took his place in the ring and instead of taking a dive in the third round as he had promised the easy money boys, he delivered a haymaker on his opponent's chin in the first thirty seconds of the first round and the other was carried from the ring. The warden won his bet and the fighter got his parole.

Almost every branch of this institution was invaded by these easy money boys, and as my time to go before the Parole Board approached, I was propositioned by one of them with an offer so strange that I hesitated to take him up. I had quite a bad previous record and judging from the action of the Board on similar cases in the past I did not have

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much hope of being paroled. This man, who was employed in the parole office and made up the parole dockets, assured me that for fifty dollars he would omit my previous record from my docket and as far as the Board would know I would be a first-timer. I agreed to pay him the fifty dollars, if I was paroled.

The day before the scheduled meeting of the Parole Board this man was removed from his job and placed in solitary confinement. I was unable to learn the reason why and did not know what the status of my record sheet would be when I appeared before the Board. I entered the Board Room with my heart in my mouth. After a few preliminary questions the chairman of the Parole Board asked me if I had ever been in trouble before. Believing that I had no chance of being paroled if they knew of my record, I intended to lie to him, but unconsciously I answered his question truthfully.

"Gentlemen," the chairman said, turning to the other members of the Board, "here is a very strange situation. This man's record shows him to be a first timer which doubtless is a clerical error. Surely a man who tells the truth under such circumstances deserves another chance. I'm in favor of giving one."

When I left prison my convict politician was still in solitary confinement. I didn't figure I owed him any fifty dollars so I spent the money on a new outfit of clothes and hoped that the next institution I visited would be free from the operations of the easy money boys, for I might be broke the next time I fell into the hands of the law.

A Daring Practical Joke

WHEN Spain's civil warfare is ended, there will undoubtedly be recorded many stories of iron nerve undismayed by danger. Displays of reckless daring even more thrilling than that of José Abad Hélices will be unearthed. Along in 1929, Hélices, a deserter of the Foreign Legion, caused Spanish prince and peasant to inquire with raised eyebrows: "Is he a madman . . . or, perhaps, the Devil?"

Hélices lays claim to fame not through any valor displayed in time of war, but rather through a peace-time trick which he probably regarded as a huge joke, as well as a way to pick up a few dollars. He donned the uniform of a captain of the Spanish army and picked up two soldiers, who became his aides-de-camp, and swooped down upon the custodian of army funds at Villarejo de Fuentes. He represented himself as being commissioned to investigate the custodian's accounts and, after looking over the books, commanded that the funds be turned over to him. Only about three hundred dollars was available, so he had to be content with that and the next day he came back after more. That was a fatal mistake for Hélices, as he was exposed, placed under military arrest, and given a court martial.

—*John Berry.*

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ILLUSTRATED CRIME

by Stookie Allen

THE CASE OF LAWYER GIBSON

THE CURIOUS REAL-LIFE DRAMA OF LAWYER B.W. GIBSON BEGAN WITH THE DEATH OF HIS CLIENT, ROSA MENSCHIK SZABO, IN JULY, 1912. THE WOMAN, AN ECCENTRIC WIDOW OF 40, HAD RETAINED GIBSON TO DRAW UP A WILL FOR HER PRIOR TO HER RETURN TO AUSTRIA.

Rosa Szabo

ON JULY 12, WHILE THE TWO OF THEM WERE BOATING ON GREENWOOD LAKE, N.Y., THE ROW-BOAT WAS UPSET. GIBSON CLUNG TO THE OVERTURNED SKIFF AND WAS RESCUED. BUT MRS. SZABO HAD GONE DOWN AND IT WAS SEVERAL DAYS BEFORE HER BODY WAS FOUND.

GIBSON CLAIMED HIS COMPANION HAD UPSET THE BOAT WHILE CHANGING SEATS. WHILE TRYING TO RESCUE HER, THE SLEEVE OF HIS SHIRT HAD BEEN TORN. A CERTIFICATE WAS ISSUED ASCRIBING THE DEATH TO DROWNING. GIBSON PACKED HIS BELONGINGS AND RETURNED TO NEW YORK.

AFTER THE BURIAL, THE DEAD WOMAN'S WILL WAS PROBATED. THE ESTATE, AMOUNTING TO $10,000, WAS LEFT TO MRS. PETRONELLA MENSCHIK OF VIENNA, MRS. SZABO'S MOTHER. SHORTLY THEREAFTER, GIBSON APPEARED BEFORE A BROOKLYN NOTARY WITH AN ELDERLY WOMAN WHO, HE SAID, WAS MRS. MENSCHIK. SHE SIGNED A WAIVER WHICH PLACED GIBSON IN CONTROL OF THE ESTATE.

COMING SOON—

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RECORDS
IN THE MEANTIME, RELATIVES ASKED THE AUSTRIAN COUNSUL IN NEW YORK TO INVESTIGATE AND IT WAS DISCLOSED THAT MRS. MENSCHIK HAD DIED TWO YEARS BEFORE. POLICE AUTHORITIES BECAME INTERESTED IN THE BOATING ACCIDENT AND ORDERED THE BODY EXHUMED. WHEN A CORONER FOUND THE DEATH WAS CAUSED BY STRANGULATION, GIBSON WAS ARRESTED.
NEWSPAPER RECORDS SOON DISCLOSED THAT THERE HAD BEEN FIVE MYSTERIOUS DEATHS AMONG GIBSON'S CLIENTS OR OTHERS CONCERNED IN THEIR CASES.
IN 1906, HE WAS SUSPECTED OF SLAYING MRS. ALICE KINNAN, FROM WHOSE DEATH HE HAD REASON TO PROFIT. NO CRIMINAL CHARGE HAD BEEN BROUGHT AGAINST HIM, ALTHOUGH THERE WERE TWO MORE UNACCOUNTABLE DROWNINGS IN THE CASE.
ANOTHER OF GIBSON'S CLIENTS JOHN O'NEAL, HAD ENTRUSTED GIBSON WITH $6,000 FROM A $10,000 DAMAGE SUIT. HE VANISHED AFTER CALLING ON GIBSON IN HIS OFFICE, AND WAS NEVER SEEN AGAIN.
GIBSON WAS TRIED TWICE FOR THE MURDER OF MRS. SZABO, BUT THE TWO JURIES DISAGREED AND HE WAS FREED OF THE MURDER INDICTMENT. HOWEVER, HE WAS CONVICTED LATER OF FORGERY AND GRAND LARCENY OF MRS. SZABO'S LEGACY AND WAS GIVEN TEN YEARS IN SING SING.
Gibson

A FEAR COMPLEX THAT SPELLED MURDER

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Pretty Parker

POLICE D F W SHORT

From behind the curtain: "Drop the gat, copper!"

By Theodore Tinsley

IT was very dark along Elwood Street. Pretty Joe Parker clicked his broad police shoes a shade more heavily than necessary as he plodded slowly toward the corner of Timson Avenue.

He smiled faintly as a bell tolled three times over the roofs of the sleeping city. It made a friendly daytime sound like the slap of Joe's feet. Three weeks of service as a probationary cop hadn't yet rid Parker of the sense of utter loneliness that comes with the early morning tour.

He Would Remain a Rookie Cop Until He Had Shown Both Headquarters and Gangdom That He Could Take Plenty of It!

The sidewalks were clean but the streets were filled with melting slush. Occasionally a cat prowled, its eyes a green-slitted glow. The rest was silence—and the empty stretch of Joe's beat—up Elwood to Timson, along Timson to Herkimer, and east on Herkimer past the gaunt shadows of clip joints, tenements and dives, all the way to Wayne Place. It was the sort of

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ominously quiet beat that desk lieutenants like to assign to untested rookies, especially the good-looking kind with a high intelligence rating from the police school.

Joe turned the corner into Timson, his eyes lifting mechanically toward the distant red glow of a taxi's tail light. He was unaware of a bulky figure crouched in a doorway until he felt a quick breath behind him and the tap of a hand between his shoulder blades.

He whirled sideways. The sight of Sergeant Rainey's cold grin brought no relaxation to the rookie. He remained poised lightly on his toes, staring wordlessly at his superior.

Rainey's chuckle was neither nasty nor friendly. "If I was a gun punk, you'd be cold meat right now, Parker. I thought I told you to keep alert the last time I gave you a see."

"That was a dangerous thing to do, Sergeant," Joe said evenly. "You're lucky I have good nerves." His concealed right hand moved under his coat and the barrel of his drawn gun was a level gleam in the darkness. Without another word he stowed the weapon away.

Some of the triumph oozed out of Rainey's eyes, but not all. "A nice draw, son," he admitted. His tone hardened. "Is that the way you were taught to hold a nightstick?" He leaned without warning and the stick was wrenched from Parker's grasp with a single powerful twist. "You good-looking lads are all alike."

"You don't like me, do you, Sergeant?"

Rainey snorted and handed Parker back his nightstick with a brusque thrust. "Funny, how every time I drop in on you, you're at the Elwood end of your beat."

Parker flushed. He knew what Rainey meant, but he said softly, "I don't get you."

"No? Elwood Street's a nice spot to dodge trouble. Quiet brownstones, an old church, a provision warehouse at the corner. But Herkimer, at the other end, ain't so good at night, huh? A wise probationer, by dragging his heels along Elwood and racing through Herkimer, might figure that was a smart way to keep his record clean—and keep gangster boots away from his good looking pan."

The fact that he *had* been loitering on Elwood Street, consciously loitering, deepened Joe Parker's flush. The parked sedan a block east had him puzzled. He had meant to tell Rainey about the car, and ask his advice; but instead he said with stiff anger: "I thought you and I had settled the matter of my looks and my courage last week—in the alley back of the station house."

Rainey's frosty eyes twinkled. "You showed me nice footwork and a hard left," he admitted. "If you hadn't, you wouldn't be out here on post now. Remember, it don't take charges to bust a probationer. You got six months to make good or—out. Personally, I got nothing against you. I don't care a damn whether your eyelashes curl, whether you brush your teeth every morning—"

"Thanks," Parker said. He shrugged and took a step or two up the avenue, then changed his mind. Turning, he walked abruptly past Rainey to the corner of Elwood and swung into the quiet residential street. His heart was thudding with anger. The hell with Sergeant Rainey! So long as he kept on his post and obeyed regulations, he'd walk his tour any damned way he pleased!

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HE was trying to play the game and prove himself a good guy, but they wouldn't let him. He thought grimly of the stuffy old cockroach-ridden station house, of the clannish pavement pounders in the squad room. He knew what they were calling him behind his slim back. Pretty Parker. Little Miss Eyelashes. Handsome Harry. Pig Murphy had it easier. He wished that his nose was broad and spongy like Pig's. But there was nothing to do but grit his teeth, take the rough horseplay—and earn his shield.

Abruptly, Parker's quick step slowed on the darkened sidewalk. The parked sedan that had puzzled him was still at the curb in front of the provision warehouse at the corner. He forgot about Sergeant Rainey as he laid his gloved palm against the radiator. It was still hot enough to make him jerk his hand away.

He glanced at the dark front of the warehouse, at the respectable brownstone dwellings that stretched sedately to Timson Avenue. For no reason at all he had laid a hand against the sedan's hood as he passed it on his first trip. The fact that the engine was warm seemed perfectly natural to him. Someone in one of the brownstones had parked the car near the corner. Probably a physician, returning from a late call, too tired to garage the thing.

But on Parker's return trip, a half hour later, its engine was still warm. A third time—and now a fourth—ditto! Was someone driving that innocent looking car back and forth, timing his stealthy trips by the regular goings and comings of a rookie cop? Parker frowned. The fact that he was a green probationer was no secret in the neighborhood. Friendly storekeepers asked about his predecessor, wished him luck with the tough mugs in the Coffee Pots along Herkimer.

He peered through the window of the empty sedan. This time it wasn't empty. There was a laprobe in the back, covering what looked like the piled outline of three or four wooden cases.

The sharp click of nearby heels jerked Parker's head around. He was surprised to see a bareheaded girl hurrying down the tall front stoop of the brownstone dwelling that adjoined the provision warehouse. The sight of her made Joe gulp. She was in evening dress, shimmering green silk that floated like a soft cloud as she raced down the steps, a bare arm beckoning urgently toward the gaping patrolman. Even at the twenty-foot distance that separated them he could see that she seemed desperately frightened.

"Officer! Q-quick!"

"What's the trouble, lady?"

SHE met his alert step with a frightened rush. She was not a girl but a woman. Small, doll-like face on a mature figure that was candidly outlined under the stretched material of the evening gown. A hint of liquor on her breath.

"My—my husband! He's drunk. He's threatening to commit suicide!"

Parker hesitated. "You've been drinking a little yourself, lady."

"Please! We've just come home from a party. My husband is Dr. Charles Winslow. I—I flirted horribly at the party, and now he's nasty drunk on the living room sofa with a gun—and he says he's going to k-kill himself!"

Parker glanced upward. The living room window was lighted. At the top of the stoop was a porcelain sign with square black letters: CHARLES

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WINSLOW, M.D. Ordinarily a patrolman on post had no business in that quiet dwelling, but when a citizen rushed out with a plea for police protection—regulations were emphatic and crystal clear!

The woman had left the front door unlatched. Parker entered ahead of her, his nightstick taut in his grasp. He tiptoed across an ornate hallway and made a quick rush into the living room. A man in evening clothes was sitting bolt upright on the sofa, but there was no sign of a gun in his hands. He was smiling queerly.

"So you fell for it, eh, Officer?" He swore amiably at his wife. "You should have been an actress, Amy. You're good—even when you're drunk. You win the hundred."

A click sounded as Parker turned. Mrs. Winslow had closed and locked the living room door. She stood there swaying slightly, with the key in her hand and a vacant smile on her face.

Winslow remained seated on the sofa. "Sorry to annoy you this way, Officer, but there's no reasoning with my wife when she's tight. After six drinks, she always wants to talk to policemen. She saw you from the window and she bet me a hundred dollars she could have you in here in less than three minutes. Now I hope she'll calm down and go to bed. You've had your joke, Amy. Give him the key like a good girl."

She laughed shrilly. "Did you ever see a more good-looking young cop in your life? What's your name, Handsome?"

Joe's face flamed. "I'll take that key!"

His hand reached out, but her small fist eluded his and flashed to the bodice of her gown. The key dropped out of sight.

Dr. Winslow laughed with a strained sound. "Now, Amy—"

His amusement vanished as the angry patrolman jerked him from the sofa.

"Get that key, Doctor, and get it fast—or I'll smash the door down and lock the two of you in cells!"

"The fun's over, honey," Winslow told his wife quietly. "Give him the key."

It took a little time. Winslow's wife giggled, dodged away from his clutch. Around a chair, past a console table. He cornered her beside an expensive radio cabinet, kissed her, shook her gently. The key landed on the rug with a soft thud. Parker, who had watched with compressed lips, bent and recovered the key. He unlocked the door and threw it open. Amy stopped smiling and sat down suddenly on the sofa.

"Oh, dear, I think I'm going to be sick," she quavered.

A ten dollar bill was thrust deftly into the patrolman's palm by the doctor, but Parker opened his gloved fingers and let the bill flutter to the floor.

WINSLOW shrugged, forced a smile. He looked haggard and pale. "That's not a bribe, Officer. I meant no harm. I'd appreciate it if you'll forget about this silly business."

The front door closed and Joe Parker went down the brownstone stoop. He felt irritated and foolish. The whole episode seemed so senseless. He glanced down the sidewalk toward the curb in front of the provision warehouse. The parked sedan was still there. He was walking toward it, when again he heard the sound of footsteps.

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This time it was his familiar red-faced nemesis: Sergeant Rainey, a low growl in his throat, his face angrier than Joe's.

"What were you doing in that brownstone? A free drink—or a pretty servant girl?"

Joe's ill-humor vanished at the absurdity of the charge. He was glad suddenly that Rainey had appeared. He knew the sergeant was perfectly justified in suspecting malingering on his part. But more than that: he knew Rainey was a veteran cop with plenty of experience and a hard practical shrewdness.

"There's something might funny about this parked sedan, Sergeant," he said slowly.

He walked along the curb and stared into the locked car. The laprobe was still in the back, but it was lying crumpled on the floor. The boxes it had covered were gone.

Eagerly Joe recounted his story of the motionless car with a motor that never cooled, a doctor's drunken wife and the vanished boxes.

"Hmmm." Rainey stroked his square chin. He looked massive, businesslike. No petulance under the frosty eyebrows. He and Parker were two police comrades, facing a puzzling fact that demanded immediate investigation.

"It sounds as screwy as the devil," Rainey admitted. "The chances are that Winslow and his wife have nothing to do with the parked car out here. Lots of women act like nuts after they've had a few drinks. But Dr. Winslow's a pretty decent sort. He's house physician at Garden Hospital—What's the matter?"

Joe Parker was pointing at the sidewalk in front of the darkened provision warehouse. There was a lump of snow lying near the slant of the close cellar entrance to the building. The rest of the sidewalk was swept clean.

Rainey nodded. "The guy that unloaded the sedan must have put the boxes in the cellar, all right. He tracked snow across from the curb."

Parker shook his head. "It couldn't be snow. The stuff hasn't melted. Wouldn't it melt with the temperature up above freezing? Look at that slush in the gutter!"

He drew off a glove, picked up the white lump and dropped it with a faint exclamation after a second or two. He showed Rainey the slight burn on his palm.

"Solid carbon dioxide," he said softly. "Dry ice. It doesn't melt like snow. It evaporates."

"Well? Don't shippers use that stuff to freeze meats and chickens?"

Parker looked incredulous. "A shipment of meat—at three in the morning? Delivered from a sedan that pretends to be parked, and has obviously been making trips every time I've left this end of my beat?"

His voice choked, but he added breathlessly: "They used dry ice once on Tony Falerno. His body was dissected and shipped in separate parcels to Philadelphia. Capt. Lawrence said at the police school that—"

"Damn the police school," Rainey whispered impatiently, his eyes narrowed. He tugged at the slant of the metal cellar door and it lifted easily in his grip. He crouched and peered down the dull, slippery surface of a delivery chute that vanished below into the blackness of the warehouse cellar.

He cried softly: "Hey! Hey there, down below!"

There was no answer.

"You stay here," Rainey ordered the patrolman. "I'm going down and have

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a look. Keep your eye on the street entrance of the warehouse." His florid face grew a shade redder. "You and your dead bodies! If I find everything shipshape down there, I'll make things a lot tougher for you from now on!"

He sat gingerly on the metal slide and tried to brake his descent, but his hands slipped and he whizzed out of sight on the flat of his back. There was a thump below, a curt growl of profanity. Then the click of the sergeant's pocket torch made a tiny beam of light that moved forward out of the range of Joe Parker's vision from the top of the chute.

II

HE waited, peering over his shoulder at the warehouse door and the adjoining brownstone dwelling from which the pretty wife of Dr. Winslow had appeared with her fake story of an emergency. Unlike the sergeant, Parker had a grimly growing hunch that the doctor's yarn was a lie, too; that stuff about a hundred dollar bet was pure moonshine. Their sole purpose was to get a green rookie cop off the street while four boxes were slid down a chute to a warehouse cellar. Four, at least, that he knew about!

The minutes passed slowly. At last he could stand it no longer. He cried in a low voice: "Find anything, Sergeant?"

No reply. No sign of the electric torch. Twice more Parker called without an answer.

Then he acted swiftly. He drew his gun, sat on the slippery chute and allowed his body to whiz recklessly downward. The curve at the bottom threw him outward onto hard concrete. It was pitch dark except for the faint square of the open cellar door at the sidewalk.

Parker crept noiselessly until he felt the hard surface of a wooden box behind him. He stood up, exploring with his left hand. The boxes were piled one above another in a tall tier. There was an angle between two piles and he crouched in as far as he could and struck a match.

The flickering light showed a room crammed with boxes, barrels and heavy burlap bags. In the center of the floor were four recently opened cases. Dry ice had been scattered all about the floor, and the carcasses of half a dozen frozen chickens lay where they had been dropped by some hastily exploring hand. They were as stiff as boards. There was a single blurred footprint in the white snowlike crystals—and no sign whatever of Sergeant Rainey.

PARKER'S match went out and he struck another. He found a light button on a concrete supporting pillar and he pressed it, filling the cellar with dim radiance from a tiny frosted bulb in the whitewashed ceiling. He examined the frozen chickens in the four open cases. All of the boxes had been recently disturbed.

Instead of being packed in flat orderly rows, the chickens were jammed in helterskelter confusion. Except for the two bottom rows. Parker's eyes narrowed as he noticed that in each box; the two bottom rows of poultry had been untouched.

A quick thought occurred to him. With his gun alert he plunged his left hand inside the carcasses of half a dozen of the chickens and explored their cold cavities. They were empty.

He moved cautiously to the rear of the cellar along a narrow passageway flanked on both sides by tall tiers of boxes. He found another open space with a desk and a droplight—but no

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sign of Sergeant Rainey or the man who had slid the four cases down the chute and ripped them open so hastily.

To the right another passage led through what looked like an arched opening. Parker wheeled and was advancing slowly—when he halted with a faint exclamation. In the dim light that filtered from the front of the warehouse cellar he could discern vaguely a thin, wavering line of black drops on the floor. Above them, hanging from a bent packing box nail, was a tiny shred of cloth. It was little more than a criss-cross of broken threads, but Parker recognized color and material with a thump of his heart. It was a torn fragment of blue uniform.

He bent and touched the black drops on the floor. They smeared and left a sticky crimson stain on his finger-tip.

Beyond the arched opening was a squat something that looked like a furnace and boiler. The silence and the darkness was profound. He was advancing noiselessly toward what look like a flight of wooden stairs, when something crashed against the back of his head toppling him on his face with his arms stiffly extended.

Before he could move two figures sprang on him. A knee dug into his spine and hands clamped on his throat from behind. Nightstick and gun were wrenched from his dazed grasp.

A voice snarled pantingly: "Got his rod, Phil?"

"Yeah."

"Oke. Git him up!"

Parker tried to clutch at a dimly seen ankle but the foot shifted and kicked him hard in the temple. He was dragged to swaying legs by his two panting assailants. The man called Phil chuckled with a shrill sound.

"You think there's any more of these opkays around?"

"Nope. Just the sarge and this dumb rookie with the pretty pan. Let's go, Andy."

Andy's revolver muzzle jammed into Parker's spine. He was hustled up the cellar steps with no attempt at concealment. Along a carpeted hall, past the opened doors of a living room. Parker blinked with belated comprehension as he caught a glimpse of his surroundings. He was no longer in the provision warehouse. The cellar archway was a passage through the building wall. He was in the discreet brownstone home of Dr. Winslow.

He could see the faces of his captors now. Bleak-eyed, thin-lipped, dressed in conservative tailored suits. He knew this well-fed type. He had seen one or two like them at police lineups, sneering cockily while they waited for a high-priced lawyer to spring them from custody. Pampered killers of some powerful big shot.

DOCTOR WINSLOW! A respected physician with an expensive blond wife. His cellar linked with the warehouse next door. A legitimate mercantile business by day, a thieves' headquarters at night. Parker had noticed the stencil on the ripped cases of frozen chickens. They had been shipped from San Francisco. He suspected part of the answer now. The middle layers of poultry stuffed with contraband. Hot jewelry? Dope? Bank hauls?

He had no time to think. He was hustled to a locked door on the top floor. Phil knocked twice — once — twice again. The door was opened from the inside. Parker was shoved into a room thick with cigar smoke and brilliant with light.

"Very nice team work, boys," the fat man told Andy and Phil.

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He was in evening clothes, as bland and smiling as a kewpie. His face looked vaguely familiar, but Parker couldn't remember where he had seen him. There was a highball glass in his dimpled white hand, and a diamond on his fat finger winked and glowed like living flame. The three men with him said nothing at all. Two of them Parker didn't know. The third was Dr. Winslow. Like the fat man, they were all in evening clothes. Parker's glance jerked swiftly about the room but he could see no sign of Sergeant Rainey or of Dr. Winslow's flashy wife.

"You can't get away with this," he told the physician coolly.

"Wouldn't you know he was a rookie?" the fat man chuckled.

"Where's Sergeant Rainey? What have you done to him?"

"It became unfortunately necessary to insert a knife in his ribs," the fat man said dryly. "He knows too much about the chicken business. So do you. This brownstone dwelling and the warehouse next door is, as you probably suspect, a very important depot in my mercantile system." He smiled. "I can't run the risk of dumping dead policeman in the neighborhood—nor can the good Doctor Winslow risk his excellent standing in the community. So, tonight we're altering our procedure slightly."

The fat man's lips smiled, but not his eyes.

"Tonight, we're importing frozen chickens and exporting—frozen cops. With the aid of dry ice. The doctor is an excellent surgeon and we have plenty of boxes. I think we'll ship you to Detroit. It'll be rather hard to identify either you or the sergeant. For one thing you won't have any clothes on. For the second, you and the sergeant will be thoroughly shuffled like a deck of cards. The doctor, a really humane man, will use an anæsthetic before he—er—operates. Give him the hypodermic, Winslow."

Winslow rose, his face mask-like. Parker jerked backward, tried to tear himself loose from his two captors. A gun butt ended the struggle. Winslow glided behind the cop and Parker felt the skin at the base of his neck pinched briefly. It was followed by the sharp prick of a needle, the pain of an injecting fluid shot from a glass syringe into his tissue.

Winslow said hoarsely: "He'll pass from a catileptic trance to death in about fifteen minutes."

"Toss him in with Rainey," the fat man said.

THE groggy patrolman was propelled swiftly down a long corridor toward a bolted door that closed off the end. Midway down the hall was a doorless room, a small square cubicle like a trunk room. Parker jerked his face sideways as he was dragged past. To his amazement he found himself staring at the blond wife of Dr. Winslow.

The glimpse was only momentary. But in that swift second he saw that the woman was bound hand and foot. Her jaws were clamped helplessly on a gag; her blue eyes were glassy, bulging with terror.

The next instant the bolt at the end of the hall was shot back and Parker was tossed through a doorway on his face. As he rolled over he saw Sergeant Rainey lying a few feet away from him, his eyes closed, the tunic of his uniform dappled with blood. Parker promptly groaned and pretended to collapse against the floor.

"Shall I rap him one on the skull for luck, Andy?" the grinning Phil asked.

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"Let him lay. He'll be as stiff as Rainey as soon as the Doc's syringe starts working."

The door slammed. The bolt on the outside clicked. As soon as the heavy footsteps receded there was a faint convulsive movement from Sergeant Rainey and his eyes jerked open. They were hazy with pain. Blood welled from a knife wound in his side as he beckoned feebly.

Parker crawled noiselessly forward, bent over his companion.

"They got me bad," Rainey breathed. "I can't escape from the window—too weak. But you can. I want you to get reserves—hurry—I've found out plenty."

He took a quick breath and his faint whisper grew stronger. As he listened Parker's eyes scanned the room, noted the closet, the closed window, the room bare of any furniture. They were in a tough spot.

"That fat man is Rocco Carvallo," Rainey gasped. "He and Winslow are in cahoots. I found canisters of opium inside the frozen chickens before Phil and Andy got me. Carvallo is the guy that killed Tony Falerno and shipped him in dry ice to Philly. This brownstone and the warehouse are the headquarters of the gang. Biggest distributing point in the East for hot bonds, jewels, drugs. Rocco kidded me about it—boasted—"

Parker started to rise but the clenched fingers of the sergeant held him taut. "Narrow stone ledge outside—window," he breathed painfully. "Did they take your nippers?"

"No." Parker drew them out of his pocket.

"If you can inch along the ledge without falling—there's a clothesline from the second window to the left. It slants down to a pole in a tenement yard. When you reach—clothesline—handcuff your wrist to it and slide across."

"How about you? They'll—"

"Get the reserves," Rainey gasped. "The hell with me."

Parker reached the window with a noiseless leap. He lifted it cautiously and glanced out as Rainey had done before him. The stone ledge was even narrower than he had feared, but the clothesline was like a grim beckoning hand to safety. Parker was confident he could make the dangerous slide to freedom. In spite of the drug injection he had been given by the crafty Winslow, he felt alert, eager, filled with restless energy.

He was convinced now that Winslow meant to kill not only Rainey and himself, but his wife as well.

He glanced over his shoulder at Rainey and the closet. In that second his reckless plan was born. He left the window purposely raised.

"I'm not going out the window," he told Rainey. "Either we both escape or we'll take the rap—together."

"Damn you, you'll take orders!"

"The hell I will," Parker said with a thin, excited laugh. His hands shook unaccountably as he heaved up the helpless Rainey. The bulky sergeant felt as light as a feather. "The drug is working on me," Parker thought grimly. "I've got to move fast before I pass out."

III

HE opened the closet door, laid the sergeant inside and closed the door softly. Then he ran back toward the window, laid himself limply on the floor, his hand outstretched toward the open sill.

He had a queer desire to kick the door down and batter at his enemies with his bare fists. For an instant he wondered if

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Winslow had injected heroin into him by mistake; but he knew that was not true; the exhilaration he felt had developed too slowly to be a true heroin reaction.

He heard the tramp of feet in the hallway outside. The bolt slid noisily back. Under his lids Parker saw the man called Phil enter the room, stand stock still for an instant as he noted the absence of Rainey—and then run with a curse toward the opened window. He stared toward the stone ledge and the clothesline.

Parker hit the thug like a battering ram. Phil's gun was twisted out of his hand, sliding halfway across the floor. Before he could yell, the cop's hands were a vise around his throat, shutting off his cry. The faint scrape of feet against the floor was the only sound. Phil's face was purpled. Parker held him until he crumpled. Then the patrolman dived for the gun and brought the butt of it down hard on the crook's skull.

He reached the open door in three strides. He knew that the wounded Rainey was safe, even if Phil recovered. Phil, unaware of the closet stunt, thought that the sergeant had gone out the window. But there were four armed men in the large room down the hall—including the deadly and very polite Mr. Carvallo. And there was a double-crossed blonde tied up in the storeroom waiting for slaughter at the hands of her criminal husband.

As he tiptoed down the hall past the storeroom, Parker saw the gagged Mrs. Winslow staring out. She seemed to nod a desperate "yes" at him, but he paid no attention and padded onward, Phil's gun rock-like in his hand. A sudden leap carried him through the doorway of the living room.

"Stick 'em up!"

Carvallo was the only one who moved. But his gesture halted instantly, his hand frozen halfway to his hip. Slowly his fat hands elevated. Dr. Winslow and the other two did likewise.

Parker backed across the room toward the telephone on a low wooden stand. His left hand lifted the receiver from the hook. But before he could yell into the mouthpiece the muzzle of a weapon jabbed into his back.

"Drop the gat, copper!"

It was Andy, the second of the two thugs who had slugged Parker in the cellar. He had appeared phantom-like from behind a velvet window drape. Parker let his gun fall to the carpet.

"Blow his spine out!" Carvallo whispered.

A gurgling cough from the hall doorway brought Andy's muzzle away from Parker's spine like the flick of a snake's tongue. Sergeant Rainey was tottering weakly on the threshold. He fired a scant second before Andy's gun exploded. His bullet whizzed over the shoulders of Parker and ripped into the forehead of the gunman.

Rainey's legs collapsed the moment he pulled his trigger. He fell forward on hands and knees, his head sagging. Carvallo had drawn his gun. But Parker was diving at the floor, clutching for the weapon he had dropped. It flamed from his propped wrist as he rolled over.

Carvallo screamed like a woman, caught at his stomach and collapsed on his fat knees. Parker drilled the man next to him while the echo of the first shot still roared.

The third mobster furrowed Parker's cheek with a bullet and leaped aside. His gun swung toward the tottering figure of Sergeant Rainey who was blindly trying to aim at the killer.

Parker threw himself desperately forward to cover his comrade. A bullet smashed the bone in his forearm. He

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saw the killer's face, taut with triumph. Dr. Winslow, too, had a gun, and it was swinging level.

Both weapons flamed. But Winslow, with a face as white as clay, fired at the mobster, not the patrolman. Through a hot smear of blood Parker saw the physician turn and run like a crazed man from the smoke-filled room. He tried to rise, to take a faltering step in pursuit—then the whole room swayed upward and around him like a spinning top. Pain wrenched his shattered forearm and he knew he had fallen. Through his mind whirled a vaguely astonishing thought: "Winslow saved my life. He's innocent. So is his wife." Then all thought was gone in a deep and cushioned blackness.

IT hurt Joe Parker to return to consciousness. He fought against it with feeble persistence. But the strong sting of whisky in his throat pulled him gasping out of nothingness.

He saw as though in a dream the alert forward-thrust face of his precinct skipper. The room was filled with blue-coated patrolmen.

"Smart phone operator heard the gunfire when you knocked off the receiver," Captain Allison said in his curt, familiar rasp. "She notified headquarters and headquarters flashed the precinct."

"Winslow's innocent," Parker whispered. "He shot down one of the mobsters. They've got his wife tied up in the storeroom. They—"

He felt Capt. Allison's arm lift him and his vision cleared. Winslow was standing alone and unguarded with his arm about his blond wife. She was sobbing, her face buried on her husband's shoulder. Beyond them, tumbled on the bloodstained carpet were the sprawled figures of Rocco Carvallo and his pals. The thug, Phil, was moaning faintly but the rest were starkly still.

"Blackmail and intimidation," Capt. Allison growled. "Phil squealed quick when he saw police blackjacks. The Doc's wife got herself in a jam in one of Carvallo's gambling spots. Carvallo put the screws on Winslow and made him turn this brownstone over to the gang as a cover for the warehouse next door. They've got a sliding panel in the cellar wall.

"When Mrs. Winslow went out to lure you in from the sidewalk, she did so because Phil and Andy had her husband covered from behind the sofa. Winslow had to play along. They tied up his wife and told him she'd be bumped unless he drugged you and the sergeant and dissected you for shipment out of town in boxes lined with dry ice. Winslow pretended to drug you with a hyperdermic injection, but instead—"

THE physician's haggard eyes lifted from his wife. "I gave him a shot of thyroid extract," he said faintly. "It has a powerful stimulating effect. I hoped that perhaps he might find some way to—"

Parker slumped suddenly. The precinct captain's voice roared: "Where's that damned ambulance stretcher? This man is badly hurt!"

"I'm all right," the probationer mumbled. "Where's Sergeant Rainey, sir? Is he—dead?"

Cool stretcher canvas slid under his aching body. He was lifted and carried downstairs to the street hallway. There was another stretcher on the floor of the foyer. Parker was laid alongside it while two ambulance men opened the street doors wide. The murmur of a crowd drifted up from the sidewalk, but Parker didn't hear it. He was staring at the pale face of Sergeant Rainey.

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"Sarge—are you—

"Shut up!" Rainey's lips writhed feebly. "You're a damned good scrapper, but you disobeyed orders. If you hadn't been such a young smart aleck—" His mouth twisted with a queer grimace. "—you couldn't have dived in front of me upstairs and stopped a bullet that had my name written on it. I'm going to turn you in, copper, for disobedience to a superior—for using your brains—and nabbing the most powerful underworld leader in the East."

His hand plucked weakly at the sleeve of the ambulance surgeon.

"If you guys leave any scars on this kid when you patch him, I'll—I'll—"

"Scars?" The surgeon looked puzzled. "It's just a matter of extracting the bullet and letting the broken arm mend."

"Arm?" Rainey growled thinly. "I'm talking about his face, you dope. Can't you see he's blood from forehead to neck?"

The surgeon grinned. "All he needs for that is a sponge bath. The slug nipped him on the chin and across the cheekbone. Scar nothing!"

"Swell," Rainey mumbled. His eyes closed. "On account of he's the best looking kid in my precinct and I—I sure would hate—"

He was lifted and carried out the doorway and down to the ambulance at the curb. There were tears in Parker's eyes when they came back for him. Pretty Boy Parker! Little Miss Eyelashes! Handsome Harry! All the sardonic thrusts of Sergeant Rainey tumbled through his mind. That was all done with now. Rainey approved of him as a man and a cop. Rainey *liked* him.

When they slid the probationer into the ambulance he was smiling dimly. He felt that they were sliding him straight thought the gates of heaven. It was grand to hurt and ache all over—when you knew you were no longer Pretty Parker, but a full-fledged harness bull!

A Fatal Deception

THE stepdaughter of a farmer in Western England was missing. The neighbors knew he disliked her and had once beaten her severely. He was charged with murder. He insisted with vehement indignation that the girl was wayward and had run away; and that he had not beaten her more than she deserved. The judges were so impressed that they released him upon his offer to find and produce the girl in court.

At the assizes he appeared with a girl whom he offered as his stepdaughter. But the prosecutor exploded a bombshell when he proved that the accused had gone to a relative in a distant village and induced her to let her little daughter impersonate the missing child.

The hoax convicted him. He died, frenziedly denying his guilt! Three months later, the stepdaughter reappeared. She had made her way to relatives two hundred miles away—a great distance in those days. So great that news of the stepfather's peril did not get there until after his death.

Had he only persisted in his first story, he was safe. With a lie he had fastened the noose about his own neck.

—*John Considine.*

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Model of a Thousand Murders

By

Robert W. Sneddon

Locked Doors, an Open Window Fronting on a Canal and a Dead Man Present a Clueless Crime to the Baffled Parisian Police

IN May, 1835, occurred an incident by which detective fiction writers have profited.

One night the servant of a certain Monsieur Loubet, who had been having her afternoon off, unlocked the apartment door and went in with a cheerful, "Here I am, *monsieur!* Now you shall have your supper."

But Monsieur Loubet, whom she saw sitting in his easy chair at the open window overlooking the canal, made no answer, nor did he turn his head. The maid went closer, then suddenly screamed. Loubet was dead with a crimsoned shirt front.

The police of Paris were soon on the scene. It was plain that Loubet had been stabbed to the heart by knife or dagger, but of the weapon there was not a sign, though the dead man had a number of old sabers and rapiers on his walls. None of these bore any trace of blood. For a little while the question of suicide was debated. The door had

Then he leaned out and gazed at the dirty waters of the canal

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been found locked by the servant. No one had apparently entered. Yet if the dead man had killed himself where was the weapon?

The final conclusion arrived at was that someone had entered and killed Loubet—someone who had made no noise—who had struck the blow silently, swiftly. There had been no struggle.

The concierge declared that about six o'clock Loubet had a visitor. A knife-grinder who called once a month to sharpen his cutlery had gone upstairs. She had not seen him again.

The knife-grinder was arrested, and as his reputation was none too good it looked as if he were headed for the guillotine.

He admitted having gone up to see Loubet at about five thirty, but said he knocked and knocked without getting any reply and finally left without seeing him.

The police went over the knife-grinder's route and time schedule and found he had told the truth. Nevertheless he might have killed Loubet between five thirty and six o'clock, about an hour before the maid got back.

Unfortunately for the police, medical experts thought to hold an autopsy on the dead man. In his stomach they found his lunch, notably a dandelion salad, eaten at noon, hardly digested, and the time of death was fixed as having taken place between one thirty and two thirty. And as at this time the knife-grinder was five miles away and busy on a big job, he could not be the killer. He was set free to trundle his machine and cry "Knives and scissors to grind."

Chagrined and puzzled, the police returned to the house of death. They questioned every tenant for hours. They almost had Madame Mocquet, in hysterics.

"You must remember something more—something you have forgotten. Now think back. Did nothing happen that afternoon that was odd or queer?"

Madame shook her head. Then all at once her face lit up.

"Zut— I forget! I was sitting at my window, about three o'clock, when suddenly there was a flash in the sun—and plop! I put my head out. I see nothing."

The Prefect of Police scowled, then his face as suddenly lit up. He hastened to the window. He screwed his neck and looked up to Monsieur Loubet's window overhead. Then he leaned out and gazed at the dirty canal.

He drew in his head and snapped instructions.

"At once—a drag—drag the canal bottom. Do not stop till you have found the weapon which killed Monsieur Loubet."

The drag brought up from the mud a Javanese dagger. Attached to it by a cord was a heavy weight.

Loubet had planned his own death to follow that of his wife, whom he was mourning deeply. Only being highly religious he feared that if a suicide he would not be given burial beside his wife.

He arranged his end to look like murder. When he plunged the dagger into his heart the weight attached by the cord was dangling out of the window. Once he had taken his hand from the hilt the counterpoise drew the dagger from the wound and, falling, carried it to the bottom of the canal, where but for the flash seen by Madame Mocquet it might have lain for all time, with the manner of Loubet's death unsolved.

Since then others have tried the same trick, both in fiction and reality, but to Monsieur Loubet goes the credit of the invention.

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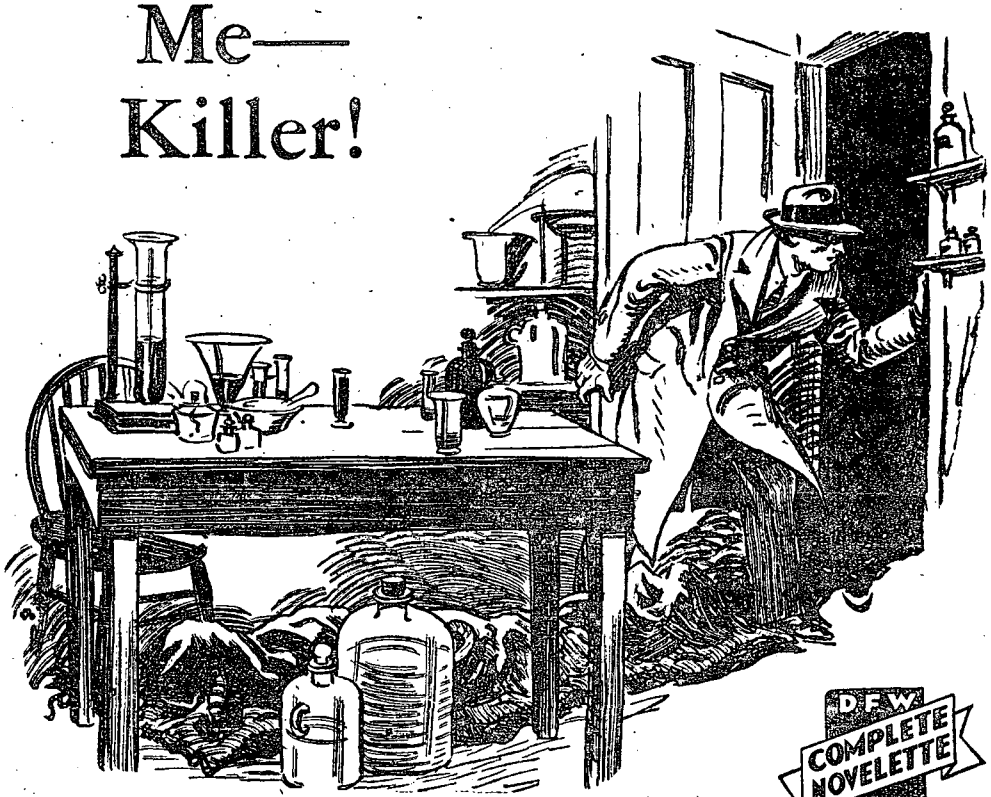
Me—Killer!



A terrific fear seized Arnold

By Frederick C. Painton

CHAPTER I

Staggering News

THE instant I entered the dining room I felt the tenseness that gripped my father and mother. I had a sense of suspense, a premonition of something tremendous about to happen.

Mother was seated at the table, looking very old and sad. Ever since I had been kicked out of college for killing a professor's three-prize collies in an unusual nerve experiment, she had grown older, slowly dehydrating and shrinking up until she looked eighty instead of sixty-four. Father was standing in the center of the floor.

Why Did This Killer Plead for a Speedy Trial and Capital Punishment? And Why, Despite His Crime, Did the Law Turn a Deaf Ear to Him?

His bald skull was pink with suppressed fury. Beneath his shaggy white eyebrows his eyes flashed, and his thin mouth was compressed as if he had arrived at a decision and intended to hold to it no matter what happened.

I attempted to carry it off jauntily: "Splendid luck with the basal metabol-

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ism test. My paper in the *Journal* will create a sensation."

My father came close to me. "You've been drinking," he said tensely.

"Don't get excited, Dad," I grinned, "that's part of the metabolism test. I had to find out if alcohol taken internally increases or lowers the rate."

"Another lie," he said bitterly. "Every time I catch you in some devilry you plead a scientific experiment. Nonsense!" he exploded. "You—a scientist—with that warped brain of yours. Bah!"

Ah, the old fool knew how to sting me. I could stand his accusation of being drunk; I could endure the continual hounding he put me to, trying to get me to work in his damned office. I could even get along without the allowance of money from which he had cut me off. But when he laughed at my experiments, he aroused a cold fury that made me want to tear him to pieces. I was proud of my scientific genius. The professors at four universities had said I had the most precise scientific brain they had ever met. I knew that given the leisure and the money, I would rank as the greatest research scientist of the twentieth century.

I said coldly, "You, with your petty low cunning mind that only knows how to rob your fellow man by selling real estate for more than it's worth—what do you know of intelligence?"

Mother sighed and covered her face with her hands. "Please, Frank, don't."

"But I will," flashed my father. "Penelope, I've stood enough. I'm beginning to see that this thing is a monster and not human."

There he was, trying to hurt me again. I laughed. "I'm your son."

"But you're not," he yelled. "Thank God, not a drop of Penelope's or my blood flows in your veins."

For a moment I stared at him in utter amazement. Then I smiled. "Is that a new way you've found of hurting me?"

"No," he replied more calmly, "it's simply that I've come to the decision to tell you that you're not my son. Nor Penelope's. We adopted you. If you had been a normal youth, you would never have known. We decided that years ago. But you aren't normal; I sometimes wonder if you are human."

Before I could interrupt he began a recitation of past events, coloring them falsely, of course. He told about my cruelty to other children when I was younger. I could have told him I was experimenting even then on the theory that part of the pain sense is located in the spinal column and not the brain. He expatiated on my aloofness and antisocial traits. What could he, extravert that he was, know of a great brain's desire to have solitude in which to think?

BUT I did not seek to explain this to him. In all truth I was stunned by his statement that I was not his true son. All my twenty-six years I had been led to believe that I was his son and upon his death would inherit two million dollars and that money would give me the leisure to carry on my great experiments.

I believe that at that instant the idea of killing him generated in my mind subconsciously. My conscious brain was recovering from this blow.

"If I'm not your son," I yelled at him, "then who am I?"

"I wish I knew," he said bitterly. "All I can tell you is that Penelope and I took you from the Municipal Foundling Home. We could have no children ourselves and Penelope wanted a child. We went there. I wanted to have a child

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whose parents were known so we could investigate the background. But you were crawling on the floor. She fell in love with you, God help us both."

I listened, too stunned to comment.

"The Lord knows, Arnold, we have tried to do our duty by you. We gave you every advantage. We raised you as a son should be raised. We looked forward to the time when you could take my place and be an honor not only to us but to yourself. We overlooked your queerness as a child. We've tried in every way to make you normal. But that was impossible."

His thin mouth stiffened. "So I have decided to tell you that you are no child of ours. And to tell you that you may look for no great inheritance from me. I have a duty by you which I recognize. A small income shall be arranged in a trust fund. But you are not capable of handling the power that wealth entails. I intend to change my will Monday to this effect."

He paused as I stood staring at him.

"And," he went on, "I do not want you to remain in this house any longer."

His words were striking like hammer blows and I was bereft of speech. And now, at last, he revealed the reason for this decision. His hand came out of his pocket holding three slips of paper.

"I.O.U.'s for five thousand dollars to a man named Tucky Wiener," he cried angrily. "By what right do you gamble money which you do not possess? What made you think I would pay these I.O.U.'s?"

Inside me, I cursed Tucky Wiener. True, the man had been pressing me for weeks to pay the five thousand. The fool had let me play roulette on credit because he knew Franklyn Reese was worth a fortune. He had threatened to send them to Franklyn, but I had not believed he would.

Aloud I said, "I was not gambling with the desire to win or lose. I was merely experimenting on the recurring rhythm of numbers. I have a theory that all stellar and earthly phenomena can be explained mathematically and—"

"Lies! Tell me no more," he cried. "And tell this Tucky Wiener that I shall not pay a penny. Not a single penny of this debt."

I had to be alone to think. Saying no more, I turned on my heel and went upstairs to my laboratory. I knew then definitely that I intended to kill Franklyn Reese that night. Before he had time to change the will.

And I knew, too, that Mother Reese would have to die. Once Franklyn had spoken about the will. It set up a trust fund which Mother Reese had for her life. The income was eighty thousand dollars a year. After her death the trust reverted to me to remain a trust until I was forty at which time the estate became mine to do with as I pleased.

If he changed the will, Mother Reese would get lifetime use of the trust, but would have no power to change it. His new will would doubtless make other dispositions. That could not be. If my great scientific brain was to be of use to humanity, then it must be well-endowed. In killing them both I was doing science a great service.

But how was I to kill them? I was a well-informed toxicologist, but poisons take too long. Moreover, the police, stupid though they are in most things, usually have autopsies and poison can be readily traced by a chemist. So I must use some other method; one so clever that the stupid police would be without a clue to me.

The idea, almost complete, came to me around eight-thirty. I tested it backwards and forwards as I would an experiment, to make sure it had no flaw.

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I grinned at its simple cleverness. If the police were ten times more brilliant than they were, the plan would completely befool them.

At a quarter to nine my fa—I mean Franklyn Reese—came up to my laboratory.

"You will have to pack all this and leave," he said grimly.

"Naturally," I told him coldly. "I hope, however, that I may stay here tonight. It's rather late to be kicked out."

He handed me a hundred dollars in twenties. "You may stay tonight, but I do not wish to see you at breakfast. You will get a hundred dollars the first of every month so long as you live."

With no other word he turned and went down the stairs. I smiled after him. The fool! I hated him so that the muscles of me stiffened at sight of his bent back.

CHAPTER II

The Plan Works Perfectly

THE secret of my plan lay in perfect timing and the fact that our apartment was air-conditioned because of Mrs. Reese's asthma. I laid out my time-table, checking each minute, then burned the paper. I examined the air-conditioning unit to make sure my scheme would work. Then I asked Ballard, the single servant the Reeses kept, if my father and mother were going out.

"No, Mr. Arnold," he said. I studied him as he spoke and from his attitude I knew he had not been made aware of our quarrel or that I was only a legal, not a blood son. What he told me simplified the scheme even more. Mr. and Mrs. Reese went to bed each night at ten o'clock. Ballard retired at that time to the servants' quarters which our Park Avenue duplex apartment maintained on the top floor. He would not come down until quarter to seven in the morning.

"Well," I said, "I have a big experiment that will keep me late. I must be getting at it."

I went up to my laboratory. My regular hat and coat were in the closet downstairs. But I had a duplicate upstairs. The window of my laboratory gave out on a coping two feet wide along which I had frequently crawled to a corridor window when I wanted to go out secretly. I put a can of ethyl-chloride in my pocket and went out that way now.

I went directly to Tucky Wiener's gambling place on West Fifty-sixth Street. It was raining.

I hated the sight of Wiener's fat pale face and his narrow, tricky eyes, but I pretended otherwise. He came toward me, his eyes glancing anxiously to see how I was taking the news.

I said, "You did me a bad trick, Tucky."

He shrugged, holding out his hand placatingly.

"Don't get sore, kid," he said. "I am hard pressed and I simply have to have the money. You kept telling me—"

"I know, and you wouldn't wait," I said. "Well, I am telling you now that my father told me tonight he will never pay you a penny."

He cursed and scowled at me. "That's what I get for trusting a nit-wit," he growled.

"Save your pet names," I told him, "and if you really want your money I know a way you can get it."

Instantly he was all friendliness. "How?" he asked eagerly.

"My father and mother are going out tonight and will not be home until late," I said.

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He stared. "So what?"

"So this. My mother has a very valuable pearl necklace in the safe. My father keeps ten to eleven thousand dollars in there because of the necessity of taking up options with cash."

He was very stupid. He stared as if I were a new species of lepidoptera.

"Yeah," he said softly.

"If I took the pearls or the money," I said, "I would instantly be suspected. But if someone came in and knocked me down after I had given the safe combination to him, and took what was in the safe, you'd get your money and there would be some left over for me. We could split what was over your debt three ways."

He touched my arm and said under his breath, "And it moves and breathes."

"Never mind your jokes," I said. "It's the only way you'll ever get your money and it will have to be tonight or never."

"Oh, I want my dough," he said, pinching his lower lip. "I'm just wondering how far I should play ball with the likes of you. Wait here."

HE was gone about ten minutes and when he came back a short, stocky man of thirty or so, tagged at his heels. This short man had a bald head on top, around it a fringe of black curly hair. He had slit-eyes and a cunning twist to his mouth.

"This is Baldy Grogan, Arnold," Tucky said. "He's interested in your idea."

Grogan regarded me queerly, then his glance went to Tucky, and they both nodded slightly. "What kind of a box is it, kid?" Grogan asked.

"Hall and Peters," I told him, "but that doesn't matter; I know the combination."

"Yeah, but we'll have to make this look good," Grogan said, "and as it happens I could open that make of box with a can-opener."

"It's jake then?" Tucky asked.

"Okay by me," Baldy rejoined. "I'll talk it over with the kid and we'll all meet here for the divvy."

His eyes looked queer then and I knew they had no intention of splitting with me. Nor did I care. This was my game they were playing. Baldy asked questions about the location of the apartment, the construction outside, and was most pleased when I told him that it was a duplex that could be reached by sliding along the building coping and entering through my laboratory window and then going downstairs to where the safe was located in the living room.

"Two things are important," I said.

"What?"

"Well, in the first place, do you carry a gun?"

Baldy Grogan grinned. He turned his back on the room and slid a compact Colt .38 out of a shoulder holster. I could hardly restrain a grin of joy. Here was luck! I possessed a gun of the same caliber so it would not be necessary for me to duplicate his gun as I should have had to do, had his been of another make.

"What else, kid?" he asked, putting away the gun.

"Secondly," I went on, "this has to be done on a time-table. Ballard, the butler, comes down at quarter-past eleven to put out hot milk and things. So this break-in must be done between five minutes to eleven and five minutes past."

"Ten minutes," said Grogan thoughtfully. After a pause he said, "Okay."

"Remember," I warned, "not a min-

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ute before nor a minute after. Let's compare watches now."

We did so and set them exactly. "Don't forget not to hit me too hard," I said, moving toward the door.

He smiled and nodded.

"A crack with a jimmy, kid," he said. "A little headache tomorrow, that's all."

"Very well, then," I told him. "In my laboratory—the window will be unlatched—at precisely five minutes to eleven."

We did not shake hands on it, but he nodded, and I went out into the rain. This was half-past nine, and I had to kill an hour and twenty minutes. I dropped into a big movie house on Broadway where my presence would not be noted and saw part of a very mediocre picture that only confirmed my opinion of the stupidity of the human race as a whole.

At ten minutes to eleven on the tick I dropped into the drug store at the corner of Seventieth Street and bought a package of cigarettes.

"Miserable night," I said to the clerk. He knew me; I frequently bought chemicals there. "The dampness is interfering with my chlorophyll experiment. I'll be at it the rest of the night."

"Too bad, Mr. Reese."

"Lucky I just beat you to closing," I said. "It's nine minutes to eleven."

He glanced at the big clock over the rear end of the store. "So it is. Well, I'll be glad to get home."

I HAD established the time of my appearance in the store. Once outside I instantly broke into a run. The rain kept the street deserted. I entered the apartment through the janitor's door. I had to move fast, but I was right on time. Each apartment had, of course, its own air-conditioning plant so that air from one apartment would not circulate in another and thus, perhaps, communicate sickness.

I had opened our box many a time. So it was simple now. I opened the blower case. My knife punctured the can of ethyl-chloride. I tipped it into the blower compartment. The anæsthetic gassed instantly and the whirling fan, sucking air from the cooling tubes, seized on the ethyl-chloride and sent it boiling up the intake-pipes.

I grinned, knowing what it was doing upstairs.

Ethyl-chloride is a practically instantaneous anæsthetic, but does not last as long as ether or chloroform. Mr. and Mrs. Reese, already asleep, were already in a stupor of insensibility that would last long enough for my purpose.

Furthermore, the ethyl-chloride would be sucked from the room by the cold air return pipes and in less than ten minutes not even a smell of it would remain. I emptied all the can and threw the empty into the incinerator. Its presence there would be natural, for I frequently used ethyl-chloride to anæsthetize guinea pigs and other subjects for experimentation.

I hurried outside, entered through the regular entrance, got into the elevator. I had a minute and twenty-seven seconds to reach the fourteenth floor and meet Grogan. The trip up consumed thirty-one seconds. I let myself into the reception hall and hurried to the bedroom. Ethyl-chloride was still present and I held my breath.

I stopped briefly to listen. The heavy breathing of the two in the twin beds told me they were drugged. I went up the staircase to my own quarters. I had to breathe and I could feel the shocking power of even what little ethyl-chloride was left in the air.

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I actually staggered, and for a second I wondered if my whole scheme was to be frustrated because the ethyl-chloride had persisted a few seconds beyond my calculations. But the cold air return was dragging out the fumes, and fresh air was shooting through the intake. I knelt to it, breathed deeply until my head cleared. Then I went into my laboratory.

It was precisely five and one-half minutes to eleven.

Now, everything depended on Grogan appearing on time. I walked around impatiently. The air cleared quickly, as the cubic-foot change of the air-conditioner was enormously efficient. At four and a half minutes to eleven o'clock fingers tapped on the window.

I opened it for Baldy Grogan. He had on old clothes, a felt hat pulled down, and his pockets bulged.

I said, "You're a half-minute late."

"There's time," he jerked a little nervously. "Where's the can?"

I laughed at his nervousness. A burglar with nerves. No wonder he had served time in jail.

"Down that staircase," I pointed, and opened a drawer and slid a gun with a Maxim silencer on the snout into my pocket.

"You lead the way," he muttered. "What was that you took?"

"A package of gum. Want a stick?" I grinned.

CHAPTER III

Murder!

HE cursed under his breath. I think I actually enjoyed his nervous fear. But the time was moving. I led the way to the living room. There, behind a Chinese tapestry was the safe, a bull's-eye affair that looked quite stout to me. Grogan laughed in relief. Here, apparently, was something he understood.

"Let me monkey with it a little while," he said, "then you can give me the combination and the job will look right."

"Go ahead," I agreed.

I did not know the combination.

He started to spin the dial, listening to the clicks. I checked the room, saw that every object I would require was in its place. I glanced at my watch. It was precisely twelve seconds to eleven o'clock. Good!

I walked over to Grogan, who was working by a flashlight resting on the telephone taboret—the beam aimed at the safe.

"How are you doing?" I asked.

"I could get it," he said. "I'm good on safes."

"Fine," I said, "but the combination is—what's that?" I exclaimed, fear in my voice.

He jerked, turned so that he stood exactly as I had pictured the scene in my mind. I leveled the gun and shot him through the heart. The explosion made no sound at all.

He flung up his hands, took one staggering step. "You insane—little—" his breath died in his throat and he hit the carpet all limp like a dead guinea pig. I stared at him as I would a white rat specimen, he was about as valuable. How easy he had died! He was a perfectly useless human being, living by predatory methods, and the world was better without him. However, this was no time for philosophizing.

I put on gloves—the new silver nitrate process brings out fingerprints even on cloth—and went to Mr. and Mrs. Reese's bedroom. They still breathed heavily, and the old man did not even stiffen as I dragged him from

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the bed and into the living room and stretched him face downward just inside the door. Then I brought Mrs. Reese. I put her beside him.

From Grogan's pocket I got the jimmy he had intended to use on me. Only hatred was in my mind as I poised over them and raised the jimmy.

I struck Reese first with all my strength. His skull collapsed. He died instantly. Down came the jimmy and thudded on Mrs. Reese's head. She did not move or groan either. The only difference was the limpness of muscles beyond even subconscious control. I had no compunction over what I had done. I looked at them frozen-faced. They were old, they had lived their lives. They had intended to ruin me.

I glanced at my watch. I was right on time. Many things had to be done.

I took off the Maxim silencer and hid it in a little hole in the oak floor of my laboratory where none could ever find it. Along with it I placed the brass shell of the fired cartridge. I re-loaded my gun. Then I returned to the living room. Seconds were flying.

WITH a scalpel I gouged my scalp in a long deep cut that ran on the left side of the skull. I made sure the gouge went through the skin covering almost to cut the bone. The pain was terrific, and the blood poured down. For a second I was dizzy. Then necessity drove me on.

I went to the telephone which was not of the dial type and was hooked to the exchange downstairs. The girl said, "Operator two, good evening—" I cut her off with a deep yell.

"Help. Burglars—murder—"

As I yelled, I fired my own gun up the fireplace chimney, and dropped the receiver with a crash. Swiftly, I got out Grogan's gun, impressed his fingerprints carefully on it, cocked it and held the muzzle as closely as I dared to the wound I had made with the scalpel in my scalp. For a second or so I hesitated. Suppose I—time pressed me. I pulled the trigger. My hair caught fire, and the explosion deafened me in the ear. The powder grains stung my face. For a half-minute I could not move. But the pain was not as great as I had expected. The scalpel wound had deadened the nerves, of which there are not many in the scalp anyway.

I had aimed the bullet so it hit the back of the fireplace. I looked for it now. It had chipped off a chunk of brick and fallen, flattened and hot, to the base. I picked it up and ran up to the small hole in my laboratory floor and stored it there.

I came down and closed Grogan's fingers over the gun butt. I lifted the arm so it and the gun would fall naturally. Then I took soot and filled over the chipped brick so it looked old. Steadying myself—I was panting for some strange reason—I glanced around the scene. It was just as I had imagined it. I checked again to make sure I had overlooked nothing. The girl downstairs was calling the police. They would be here at any moment.

The time for the final act had come. I measured off the distance to the sharp-pointed brass andirons. I got a good grip on my gun. Silently I let my body pitch downward. I had expected to skin the andiron and make another cut to show how I had fallen when Grogan's bullet grazed my scalp. But I must have miscalculated. I fell—and there was a rush of blackness and nothingness.

WHEN next I knew anything I sat up, my head throbbing, my brain confused. Bewildered and really hurt, I must have offered a most

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convincing spectacle of a wounded groggy man. A young man in a white uniform gave me a drink of whiskey. "You're not badly hurt," he said kindly, "so we're leaving you here until the police question you. Later we'll look over that scalp wound and see if it needs stitches."

He had taped it up. I found myself lying on a couch across the room from where I had fallen. I could see the police who were there in force. Photographers were taking pictures from several angles. From the door came a clamor and a blue-coated policeman said, "No, boys, you can't come in. Not now, anyway."

They were reporters.

A medical examiner was peering at the bodies; two thick-bodied men walked around smoking cigarettes, apparently doing nothing. One tall, lean, rather young man with a clean-shaven, tanned face was standing near the fireplace rolling a cigarette. He spilled the crumbs of tobacco into the empty grate in an absent-minded way. When I was helped to sit up, he lit the cigarette and came toward me. He had a wide mouth and rather disconcerting blue eyes which he turned upon me. He smiled. His teeth were white, big and even.

"Mr. Reese," he said, "I'm Detective Larrabee. I'm in charge of this case."

I merely nodded; I was perfectly cool but I could not have spoken then. Here was the critical ordeal I must face. Questioning by the police. No slips now or I was lost. My brain raced. I gathered the threads of memory. I stilled myself for the crisis. Somebody handed me a cigarette and said, "Smoke?"

I took it and made my hand tremble as I lit the end. I smiled weakly. "I'm sort of hazy, Mr. Larrabee."

"You ought to be," he grinned consolingly. "Another quarter of an inch and that slug would have finished you. Do you feel strong enough to talk?"

"I think so. I'll do the best I can."

I waited, grinning inside me. The fool didn't know where to begin.

"Well," said Larrabee, "suppose you start and tell us what you did tonight and carry right through as long as you remember."

I put my hand to my head; it *was* aching. Suddenly, as if I had just remembered, I cried, "Mother! Father! He struck them. Are they—are they hurt?"

Larrabee nodded gently. "Yes, I'm afraid they were. As a matter of fact, they're dead."

I uttered a loud groan. I buried my face in my hands. I sat very silent. After a while I took my hands away. "I guess I knew they were—when I saw them lying there," I said brokenly. "But the shot—at me—I loved them, Mr. Larrabee."

He made a clucking noise with his lips. I straightened up, gripped the side of the couch. "What was it you wanted to know?" I said firmly.

HE repeated his question. I pretended to concentrate. "I was working all evening in my laboratory on a chlorophyll experiment," I told him. "Chlorophyll is what makes grass and leaves green. My father and mother always retire at nine-thirty—they were older people, Mr. Larrabee. That was why my laboratory was upstairs, so I would not disturb them.

"About ten minutes to eleven or thereabouts, I found I had run out of cigarettes. I went to the Seventieth Street corner and purchased a pack—these." I pulled them out that he might see.

"I came back at once," I resumed.

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"I don't know the exact time, but it must have been eleven or thereabouts. I came up in the elevator and then decided I would get a glass of milk and a piece of cake. I was just about to start downstairs when I heard my father yell, 'What's this? Who are you?'"

I paused, aware of Larrabee's blue eyes fixed steadily upon me. He was making notes in a notebook, but scarcely looking at them.

"Then," I went on, beginning to tremble as if with memory, "I heard my mother cry, 'Frank, look out! Don't! Oh—' and she stopped. I heard the sound of blows. For a few seconds I was absolutely paralyzed. It was all so quick, so unusual that I guess I didn't function.

"Then I realized my parents were being hurt. I grabbed my gun from the drawer. I raced down the stairs. There was noise, groaning and cursing. The stairs—over there—hid me from what happened. And myself hidden from the assailant. So I came upon him unawares. As I rushed at him, I saw my father and mother on the floor."

I choked up and ceased speaking for a moment. No one spoke and I became aware of the other police officers and detectives around, listening.

"The man stood near the safe. There was a flashlight in whose glow he stood. I saw his face clearly. He was bald with big jowls and heavy-set. I'd know him again if I saw him."

"You will," said one of the detectives grimly.

I wondered at the moment why I was pretending Baldy was alive. But since it went over so well, I added nothing to that angle.

"As I saw him," I resumed, "I leveled the gun and said, 'Throw up your hands.' The man cursed. He had a deep bass voice. He put up his hands slowly. I was not afraid but I wanted help. My mother and father seemed hurt. I moved toward the telephone—over there by the fireplace. I picked up the receiver to call the alarm."

I paused as if thinking.

"I guess I must have taken my eyes off him as I lifted the receiver. Suddenly he moved. I saw a gun. His terrible eyes behind it. There was flame, a roar—and nothing more. That's all I remember."

One of the detectives said, "But you shot him. He's dead. Square through the heart."

I gave a start. My eyes widened. "I—shot the burglar?" I got up and walked toward the fireplace. Now, I could see Baldy lying just about where he had fallen when I shot him. I came back, my face quivering.

"I shot him?" I repeated. "You are sure?"

"Yes," said Larrabee. "We found your gun in your hand and one bullet discharged. You must have done it."

"It seems impossible," I said. "I have no memory of it."

This created amazement, which I had intended. All eyes turned toward the medical examiner. He nodded to Larrabee. "Reflex action could have done it. He was tensed to shoot and stimulated to do so when Grogan pulled down on him. He could have gone through with the action of shooting and be unconscious."

"I guess that's the way it was," said Larrabee. He gestured with a thumb toward the safe. "Anything in there worth taking?"

"My mother's pearls—they're a matched set," I explained, "and my father kept anywhere from ten to twelve thousand dollars on hand. He had the habit of paying options on real estate deals in cash."

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"It all fits," said one of the detectives. "Grogan always went for big cash and quick dough. And he could have opened that safe with a hairpin."

"Yes," said Larrabee, "but how did he know there was a haul in it? Who tipped him to the job?"

CHAPTER IV

Unseen Development

I SAID nothing. Later, if necessary, I could answer that. But there was no use being too glib. Larrabee was persistent. With his disconcerting blue eyes on me, he took me over the story again. He asked questions, hundreds of them. About Mr. and Mrs. Reese, about me, about our life. I answered them truthfully, but always pointing to the fact that Grogan had killed them in the commission of a crime.

Finally Larrabee said, "You are the only heir?"

"Why," I rejoined frankly, "I suppose so. I haven't seen the will. Father never talked about it. But there is one at the law offices of Northrup and Connery."

"Oh, come on, Steve," one of the detectives said. "This is open and shut. Let's get to bed."

Larrabee nodded, smiled and presently they went out, taking Grogan with them. Exultation leaped within me. They had accepted my picture. I had beaten them, the stupid fools!

Joy and relief made me giddy and I almost fainted. The interne grabbed me and said, "You for the hospital, youngster."

At St. Vincent's the surgeon took three stitches in my scalp, and the morphine he administered made me sleep soundly until the next noon.

Then I returned to the apartment. It was vacant except for Ballard who was trying to get bloodstains out of the rug.

He was weeping and sniffling as he worked.

"This is terrible, Mr. Arnold," he said. "I've been with them twelve years. I—I—"

"Yes, Ballard," I said kindly, "I know. And you shall stay with me as long as you like."

Why not? He knew nothing, and to dismiss him might cause talk. And I wanted everything forgotten as soon as possible. Harry Northrup, the lawyer, helped me with the funeral arrangements. People called to commiserate with me. The swine!

They had never liked me but now I was rich. So they said nice things. They came to the funeral and I could feel their eyes on me when the coffins were being lowered under their banks of flowers.

The newspaper accounts made quite a hero out of me. "SON SHOOTS BURGLAR WHO KILLS PARENTS." I grinned. But the main thing was that all the newspaper accounts agreed. The police were fooled. After the publicity I heard no more and knew the case was closed. But nonetheless, I conducted myself most carefully. I was the model mourner.

A fortnight passed. Northrup opened the will and asked for letters of administration. The document had not been changed. And now I was rich, beholden to no one. A brilliant scientific future before me. But I did not play the fool. I lived quietly as before.

Three days later I got a shock.

The telephone rang and Ballard said, "Detective Larrabee wishes you to come to police headquarters on Centre Street, sir."

A momentary doubt seized me. Had I overlooked some simple thing? What

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could the fool want? I knew I must go.

"Tell him I'll be down at once."

I changed my laboratory smock for a gray suit with a black left arm band. I forced myself to be calm.

Larrabee and another detective greeted me and shook hands. Larrabee motioned me to a chair. He was thinner, more tanned, and his blue eyes blazed like ice under the sun.

"We're getting ready to close the Grogan case, Mr. Reese," he said, "and there are a few points I'd like to clear up."

I shrugged. "Certainly, if I can help. But you understand the whole thing was so horrible that I'm trying to forget."

"I know, but these will only take a minute."

I WAITED. He drummed on the desk top with his fingers. "This sounds personal, Mr. Reese, but why didn't you tell us you were not the flesh and blood son of your father and mother, but adopted?"

I tried to flush. I hesitated just the proper interval. "I don't know," I confessed finally, "that night—the excitement and horror. It didn't occur to me. I've always looked upon them as my parents. I was less than a year old when they took me."

I didn't ask him how he had found out. I knew. Northrup had told him. Old Reese had left a document.

"Yes, I know," said Larrabee. Then: "Another thing, you gambled at Tucky Wiener's?"

I had expected this, too, and was prepared.

"Occasionally," I admitted, "but not heavily, and it was actually a scientific experiment on the recurring rhythm of numbers." I smiled. "I take a drink, too, and I smoke. But I am not what you would call a wild young man, Mr. Larrabee."

"No," he said, "I guess not."

The other detective who had not spoken, gave Larrabee a look half of disgust as if he thought Larrabee was wasting his time. I *knew* Larrabee was.

Finally, after the lapse of a moment or so, Larrabee said, "Another point that puzzles me, Mr. Reese, is the amount of time that elapsed between the shot that grazed your scalp and the second shot with which you apparently killed Grogan. The telephone circuit was open, and the operator downstairs, while plugging in for the police, was also listening. She heard the second shot and timed it. There was a matter of twenty-odd seconds between it and the first."

I shrugged. "I told you I don't know anything about that. I don't know yet that I shot Grogan."

"No reflex takes that long to act," he said.

"I know little about reflexes," I said, "and nothing about shooting Grogan."

I fingered my hat suggestively. The fool was maundering around. I wanted to go.

"And finally," Larrabee said, rolling a cigarette, "I'm wondering how Grogan knew what that safe contained?"

For a space I watched his slender brown fingers make the cigarette. He twisted the end and lit it, inhaling deeply.

"I may be to blame for that," I offered.

"How?" he leaned forward.

"I HAD an argument with Tucky Wiener one night. About a small debt. I said I would have cash at nine in the morning. He laughed and asked where I could get

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cash before the banks opened. I told him my father kept thousands of dollars."

"You think Tucky told Grogan?"

"I have no idea. He may have or possibly what I said was heard."

He flung down the cigarette and ground his heel on it. I knew he was baffled and grinned inside.

"Another thing," he said in a harsh voice. "Why didn't Grogan shoot your father and mother instead of taking a jimmy? He shot at you."

Coldly I replied, "I have no acquaintance with the criminal mind."

"No, of course not," he said hastily. "Only criminals have habits. Grogan was a burglar, but he had never hurt a mouse to our knowledge."

I chose those words as my cue.

I scowled. "Mr. Larrabee, I don't like that statement. I am glad to be of help to the police if possible. But these questions and your actions seem to indicate that you believe I am lying. That offends me."

"Oh, for God's sake, Steve, cut it," growled the other detective. He turned to me. "It isn't a question of suspicion, Mr. Reese. We all know how it was. Steve is a stubborn bird and wanted more answers. He doesn't question your veracity, do you, Steve?"

Larrabee's frown vanished. He grinned. "I guess I'm too sure of human nature. I shouldn't be. People do act differently at different times."

I took this as an apology. "I'm afraid they do," I said coldly. "And now, if you are through, I would like to go."

Larrabee inclined his head, his blue eyes staring straight ahead. I bowed and went out. In the anteroom I paused at a water cooler. My throat had been dry in that interview. I suppose I had not closed the door, for I heard the one detective say, "Steve, you're making a fool of yourself."

"Maybe," Larrabee's voice, angry and puzzled, came back, "but I tell you that killing was as perfect as a—as a picture. Everything fitted into place like a mathematical calculation. I've covered plenty of murders and I never saw one dovetail like that. It's too perfect."

"You're dreaming; forget it."

I went out quietly, suppressing a grin. What if Larrabee did suspect something? What did I care? He had no proof and he would be mad, indeed, to make charges in face of the evidence unless he could prove it. And there were no clues. I had seen to that. I forgot Mr. Larrabee for a week.

A week later Tucky Wiener appeared!

CHAPTER V

Blackmail

HE stood inside the threshold and waited until Ballard had withdrawn. His mouth grinned, but his eyes were hard.

"How are you, kid?" he asked softly.

I was uneasy. Here was a factor upon which I had not counted.

"I'm fine," I said easily. "I intended to drop around with a check presently. But you knew the money was good, didn't you?"

"Sure," he told me. "Good as gold."

I felt cheered. Maybe the fool didn't suspect anything after all.

"But so long as you're here, I'll pay you now." I was anxious to be rid of him.

He watched in silence while I made a check payable to him. I blotted it, stood up and handed it to him.

"Now we're square," I told him.

He took the check but his mouth was

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grinning. "Not square, kid. Make another for five times this one."

A cold chill made me stiffen. With difficulty I made my voice steady. "Just what do you mean?"

"You know what I mean," he sneered. "You can kid the cops, but not Tucky." He leaned forward, pinned me with his eyes. "You killed poor Baldy and you killed your old man and your old woman."

It was out. But he only suspected, he could not know.

"That's a lie," I said hotly. "I didn't tell all the truth to the police. Why should I? But what happened was that Mother and Father came home unexpectedly and caught us here in the living room. Grogan thought it was a frame-up, and when Father went for the telephone, Grogan nailed him with the jimmy. He nailed Mother, too, when she went to help Dad. He was going to kill me to shut my mouth, but I fired just as he did. I didn't miss."

I watched his eyes but they didn't appear convinced. He shrugged. "Okay, if that's your story, stick with it. Only pay Tucky off plenty to keep from telling the cops that you asked me to get Grogan to rob your old man's safe. What will the cops say to that?"

"You wouldn't dare," I said. "You'd be a party to that crime."

"The hell I don't dare," he jeered. "All I'd say is you asked to see Grogan after I'd dunned you for dough. They'd do plenty, the cops. Steve Larrabee has been around to see me three times and he's the smartest dick in New York."

I looked at him but I half-lidded my eyes for fear that he should see that my decision to kill him had been made.

"You could cause me inconvenience," I admitted.

"I could get you the hot seat," he jeered.

"You're crazy, but rather than be annoyed, I'll pay you extra. How much?"

"Thirty thousand bucks."

"Too much," I protested.

"You're getting millions, ain't you?" he growled.

"And if I start this, you'll never quit."

"Yes, I will, kid. Thirty grand and I'm done."

He was lying and I knew it. But I had to pay this sum to gain time to perfect a way of killing him.

"No checks," I said. "They could be traced. Meet me tomorrow at the Mutual Savings Bank and I'll give you cash."

"Now you're sensible, kid," he grinned.

After he had gone I retired to the laboratory. I always think best there. I knew Wiener must die. He would hound me endlessly otherwise. But it must be a perfect job—like the other. Because the police knew of his connection with me. And I must not even be suspected. It would have to be an apparent accident, or there must be no *corpus delicti* for investigation. But how?

I got no answer that night. But there was time—lots of it—and I must take pains. The police were stupid but no use to give them the slightest clue.

I DREW the money next morning in hundred dollar bills. There was over sixty thousand dollars in the checking account, but nonetheless the teller went to the president and there was sufficient stir made about the withdrawal to tell me the event would be remembered if something — me in trouble, for instance—should recall it to their minds. All the more reason to be careful about Tucky.

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He met me outside the bank, his eyes gleaming.

"Did you get it?"

"Of course," I told him calmly, "but remember, it's the last time."

"Man!" he exclaimed, taking the package. Then: "Sure, I ain't no fool, kid."

He looked at me queerly as he pocketed the money. "Okay, kid, thanks."

His thick-set body moved off rapidly down the street. I watched him go: accident or disappearance! Which? I kept thinking that his pudgy body sewed in a burlap sack and weighted down by iron would stay a long time on the bottom of the river. The idea caught my fancy, and I walked crosstown to Fourth Avenue to the Marks Company that sell anything from a skiff to a two hundred foot yacht. I bought a fast speed boat. I crossed to Sutton Place where a mooring pier rented anchorage space.

All this I did, suffused by a queer feeling that I was being watched by invisible eyes. I fought down the feeling. Wiener was the single flaw and him I would dispose of.

I walked part way crosstown in order to think but then, tiring, I moved to the curb to hail a cab. As one drew up to the curb I heard a gasp behind me. A girl came flying out of a building, clutching a package.

"Cab," she hailed.

Just as she reached it, her ankle turned. She cried out, lurched and fell heavily against me. If I had not caught her she would have fallen.

"Oh, my leg!" she cried.

"That's what you get for trying to take someone else's cab," I said.

I saw that she was slender, with red hair, and a beautiful white lovely skin. Somehow her beauty shocked me. She smiled wryly. "Do you talk to all girls that way?"

I repented my rudeness. "Sorry—here, let me help you."

I almost carried her through the cab door "Look out!" she cried. "Don't knock that jar loose unless you want to start an epidemic."

"What's in the jar?" I grinned.

"*Mycobacterium leprae* — leprosy germs to you," she said. "That's why I'm in a hurry. I want to get them in their culture before they die. Puny things with no pep to live, you know."

I rode downtown with her. Her name, she told me, was Mara Daggart, and she was a research worker in the Stanton Foundation, working on a new condensation of chaulmoogra oil as a possible cure of leprosy. I found myself interested. Beauty and brains; a girl with a scientific mind and a soft feminine beauty that stirred me deeply. No woman had ever taken my eye before.

I AIDED her to her small apartment on MacDougal Street, and she invited me to stay while she got her germ colony into the jelly feed. I watched her movements, her sunny smile. I think I fell in love with her at that moment.

I, who claimed to have no emotion; I, who believed not in love but only in physical attraction; I, who held the human species but a grade above the animal—I fell in love. That night I cursed my own folly. I sought to put her out of my mind. She was interfering with my thinking. When I saw her image, my plans for Wiener faded. I determined to see her no more.

Two days later she came to my apartment. "Perhaps I'm not wanted," she said. "You certainly dropped me like a hot brick. But I did want to see your

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chlorophyll experiments and hear your reasoning."

She stayed. For lunch. For dinner. I knew then that this queer feeling that left me breathless, soft and shaken when she was around could not be shaken off. We saw each other every day for two weeks. She came and went in my apartment as she pleased. She came sometimes when I was out, and Ballard let her in to amuse herself in my laboratory.

Sometimes things were moved around, but she always explained she had been careless with retorts or Bunsen burners.

"You should be more careful," I said. "I have my things arranged with precision. A good mind believes in everything in its place and a place for everything."

She touched my hand. "Sorry, Arnold," she said. "Let's look at your air-conditioner. I'm crazy to see how they work and what effect they have on bacteria that thrive in a less humid atmosphere."

I took her to the cellar. She was fascinated as I showed her the mechanism that washed, dried, cooled and humidified the air which was then blown under forced draft into the apartment.

She suddenly laughed. "I don't know whether I like it or not, Arnold. Suppose somebody didn't like me and put a dead rat or a stink bomb in it."

"It's locked by this key," I said.

"Still," she pointed out, "locks can be forced, and if a burglar wanted to rob you and put chloroform in this blower—it would be bad."

I jerked upright. I stared at her. Was this a blind stab or did she suspect something? Was she what she claimed? Or was she, perhaps, someone planted?

She ignored my stiffness. "Let's go back and watch the chlorophyll," she suggested.

I went up, with suspicion deep within me. We did not, however, go to my laboratory. In the living room she tapped my cheek and stood close to me.

"You're angry about something, Arnold," she murmured.

The perfume of her, the closeness of her slim body overpowered me. I took her in my arms and kissed her. The touch of her lips swept me like burning fire. She surrendered without resistance, yet she did not return my caress.

Carried away by my emotion, I cried, "You've got to marry me, Mara. Think of the future. We can tour the world, study in Vienna, investigate new phenomena. With my mind stimulated by yours, we can make tremendous discoveries."

She pushed me gently away. "I like you very much, Arnold," she said softly, "but give me time to think it over. Please, I'll tell you day after tomorrow."

She left and I found myself humming and singing around the laboratory. I am not a singing person. I found myself gazing into the mirror at the thin, stoop-shouldered youth which was I. I got rid of horn-rimmed glasses to get glasses of a more fashionable shape. So happy was I that night that I thought of nothing but Mara.

The next morning the doorbell rang and, thinking it was she, I hastened ahead of Ballard and flung it wide.

Tucky Wiener stared insolently at me. "How are you, kid?" he asked.

CHAPTER VI

Murder It Is

HE thrust his way into my living room. I sent Ballard out for some chemicals. Then I turned on Wiener in cold fury. "What are you doing back here?"

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"What do you think?" he sneered. Then: "Kid, I lost that dough in a crap game. I'm broke and I got to have more."

I turned my gaze from his leering eyes, his fat, loose mouth, that he might not see the mad hatred of him that blazed there.

"How long is this going on, Wiener?" I asked with an effort.

"What do you think, kid?"

"Until I am broke and then you'll go to the police anyway."

"Oh, no, not that," he mocked. "I never kill a golden goose."

"Well," I said, "go to the police. You'll get no more money from me."

He scowled. "Won't I? Listen, kid, I know more than you think. I know how *you murdered* all three of them!"

I laughed in his face.

"You know nothing, you stupid fool."

"Easy on the names," he growled. "I'm only guessing, but the cops would like my guesses. You forget Baldy wasn't a killer, and with a rod on him he'd never have swung that jimmy. You faked the whole thing to get him there to take the rap."

Something snapped in my mind. Wiener should die that night. I became cold, calculating.

"How much do you want?" I asked. The money should bait him.

"Thirty grand."

I shrugged. "That is impossible. I haven't got it, no way to get it. You forget this was a trust fund which I cannot touch."

"What can you raise?" he asked.

"Twelve thousand in cash and you can have it tonight."

He grinned and licked his loose mouth.

"Then twelve grand is what I want," he said grimly.

"And it's the last time," I cried. "I'll give no more."

He laughed. "Sure, the last time, kid, I promise."

I pretended to believe him. "All right then, come here tonight at ten o'clock and I'll have the cash."

After he had gone with his leer, I spent minutes stilling the trembling fury within me. It would be a pleasure, I told myself, to hear him scream and beg.

I went to the bank to get the money that had baited him.

As I came out, the money packages in my pocket, a voice said, "Hello, Mr. Reese."

I suppressed a start and turned. Detective Larrabee stood near the curb, rolling a cigarette. I forced a smile. "Hello," I said.

"Have you got a match?" he asked.

I gave him a paper clip of them. He lit the cigarette, handed them back. "Thanks, you're looking well."

I said that I felt excellent.

"Glad I ran into you," he went on seriously. "I really owe you an apology for all that questioning at headquarters. I made a monkey of myself and I'm sorry."

"That's all right," I said. "In cases of death you can't be too careful."

"That's what I think. Glad you don't hold any hard feelings. The case is closed now, and I'm on another case."

I murmured some polite phrase. "Really?"

"Yeah, but this isn't as easy to close as your case." He glanced up the street. "There's the bird I'm tailing now. So long, Mr. Reese."

I watched his lean, broad-shouldered body stride up the street in long graceful swings. He must think I was a fool to believe all that cock-and-bull. He still suspected. He might even be working

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on the case. But he'd get nowhere. Tucky Wiener was the weak link, and I was getting rid of him tonight.

LATE in the afternoon I let Ballard go for the evening. I called Mara and told her I was going to be intensely occupied in an experiment and could not see her until the next day.

"Can't I come?" she begged.

"Not this time," I told her.

I ate my dinner out, and returned about eight and read Milliken's explanation of his cosmic ray theory and completely disagreed with him. Wiener came at ten minutes to ten. He seemed a little nervous.

He brightened, however, as I showed him in.

"Hi, guy," he called jovially, "how about a little drink?" I smelled his breath; he had been drinking. So much the better.

"I never drink with men like you," I said.

"Tish-tish! Them's hard words. Well," he shrugged, looked around, "gimme my dough and I'll scram."

"It's up in my laboratory," I told him. "Follow me."

I pretended to a great nervousness. "Did any one see you come here?"

"Not a soul," he assured me. "I don't want to spoil this pot of gold."

"And nobody knows you came here?"

"No." He glanced at me swiftly. "Say, don't you try to cross me. I'll let you have it, rat, quick as that." He patted his pocket suggestively.

"I wouldn't double-cross you, Wiener," I said.

I led the way upstairs to my laboratory. My heart was thudding. My breath was short. He followed me, stood looking at retorts, vapor baths and the like in curiosity. I reached into the drawer with my left hand, drew out the package of bills and tossed it on the table.

"There's your money," I said, "now get out."

His eyes gleamed. He came to the table. "Sure, don't get sore, kid," he counselled.

He bent forward to reach for the money.

My hand streaked out of my pocket, holding the blackjack. I exploded with joy as I swung at his head with all my strength.

The weight smashed squarely on the crown of his gray felt hat. He hiccoughed like a man who has laughed too much.

He staggered, pitched forward, and his face smashed into the table. His body fell back, dragging his chin along the table surface. He crashed to the floor and rolled over on his back. I grinned at him. The swine!

Swiftly now I got out the burlap sack. I dumped the body in. The iron weights were already in it.

The gloves I wore made me awkward, but I managed to sew the sack lips quickly enough.

Now came the greatest ordeal of all—getting his carcass down to the alley where my car was parked. I opened the door. I stooped. Suddenly I straightened, rigid, by breath pendent in my throat.

The doorbell downstairs rang!

The rasp of the bell came like a peal of doom. My blood seemed frozen. A terrific fear seized me. Who had come? And why? I had been cold to acquaintances; no one visited me any more. Could this be Larrabee? No! No!

The clangor of the bell reverberated through the house. Like a fool I had left on the lights. Again and again the bell clattered. Impatiently.

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I forced myself to be cool. After all, was I not clever? I'd beat them all. I put a gun in my pocket and went downstairs.

I unlocked the door and pulled it open.

"Arnold!" cried Mara. "Darling, how you must have been absorbed! I've been poking that darned button for hours, it seems."

The reaction made me angry. "What are you doing here?" I cried.

She stopped stock-still inside the door. "What am I doing here?" she repeated. "Why that tone of voice, Arnold? After all—"

I suddenly remembered myself. "I know, darling, I'm sorry," I interrupted hastily, "but as a matter of fact I'm deep in an experiment. My mind is still on it."

"Oh, let me watch," she cried.

I shook my head. With an effort I mustered a gay smile. "You shan't see anything until I am done," I told her. "But if it is a success—and I am sure it will be—what do you say we get married and catch the Europa sailing Tuesday?"

"What is the experiment?" she asked.

"The chemical reaction of kinetic rays in the transformation of polycells into chlorophyll," I said.

It was an experiment on which I had been working and I knew the solution was at hand.

"Oh, I'd love to see," she murmured.

"With you there," I reproached, "how could I keep my mind on the formula?"

I took her by the shoulders to thrust her out the door. An impulse overcame me. I kissed her roughly, thoroughly.

"Go home," I ordered. "You shall see the result tomorrow."

"Well, if you must deport me," she said, and went out the door. Hastily I slammed and locked it. I took a deep breath of relief. Now for Wiener.

CHAPTER VII

The East River

THE burlap sack containing Wiener reposed as I had left it. As I moved toward the sack I saw my face in a mirror. My skin was pale as ashes. My eyes blazed deeply in my skull. I wet my lips. This wouldn't do. I forced a smile. As soon as Wiener was sunk, I was safe from further annoyances. I grasped the burlap!

What a task! I took him down the fire staircase. I met no one, fortunately. But I had to rest every few minutes. I tugged, pulled, lifted—even rolled. And at last I had the sack at the cellar door that led to the alley. I reconnoitered the alley. It was empty. Hastily I tugged the sack into the rear of the car. At last! The worst was over.

I climbed in, grinning. A tremendous joy suffused me. Years hence, when people honored me for my scientific exploits I could remember this moment and snicker inside.

I drove leisurely across town, assured of myself, humming a little tune. The East River was deep, its currents treacherous. If ever Wiener was found, the crabs would have picked his bones clean.

I had no compunction over what I was doing. Wiener was a rat, a gambler who preyed on others. He deserved death.

And anyway, death was a finality to all. Human life was not more precious than any other animal life, only stupid humans had made laws to preserve themselves because they feared death.

The fools! Death was a necessity at times. Human progress thrived on death—look at wars! And how easy to inflict by a clever person!

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I was proving that any one with half-intelligence could kill and the stupid police could be fooled. Only by accident do they catch a killer. And then the murderer is usually one who strikes in mad, blind fury, with no thought of the consequences. But me, cool, with foresight, they would never catch me.

At length I reached Sutton Place—where at a mooring dock my boat lay. Here I waited a space to make sure no one saw me. Then I tumbled my burden out and dragged it across the ground to the twenty-four foot speed boat.

Wiener's body fitted into the stern sheets. I moved forward, over the engine cockpit, pushed the self-starter and the motor burbled pleasantly. Casting off, I steered straight out and then turned north in the center of the channel. Ward's Island's light slid by. Over my head were the looping strands of lights on the Queensboro Bridge, glistening like illuminated pearls. A light mist hovered near the black water.

I went north, slowly, with muffled exhaust, almost to Hell Gate Bridge.

Here I slowed the boat up, set the wheel, and moved back toward the sack. I stopped suddenly midway.

I thought I heard another motor exhaust. I listened intently, stared into the gray opaqueness of the mist on the water. But I saw nothing.

Imagination, I told myself. The imagination that makes cowering fools of murderers who fear to take human life.

STILL listening, I moved back to the throttle and steering wheel and shut off the motor. For a moment or so I let the boat drift. I heard nothing at all. There was no sound except the muffled beat of city noise. I moved back to the sack. Now was as good a time as any.

As I climbed over the mid-section hatch that held the motor, I thought I heard a groan from the bag. Wiener was regaining consciousness. The fool must have had a head like concrete not to die under such a blow.

"But you won't groan after this splash," I grinned at the bag. "You knew nothing, but you guessed too much, Wiener. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing, and as the Arabs say, a fool and his life are soon parted."

I scaled the hatch. "Didn't you realize," I sneered, "that after I had killed Mr. and Mrs. Reese, killing you would be easy?" I laughed again. "The minute you asked for money you were doomed." There was no more sound from the bag.

I reached down to get the bag in my arms. "Good-by, Wiener," I grinned.

I started to lift the bag. Before my eyes the lips of the bag fell apart. A gun muzzle thumped into my chest.

"Reach 'em, Reese," growled a voice. "You're under arrest for murder!"

"Larrabee!" I gasped. His lean grim face reared out of the bag.

Larrabee! What did this mean? How did he get here? For a second I was stunned enough to be incapable of movement. In that time he shook down the bag from his shoulders and straightened up, the gun snout still pressed against my breast. "You've had all the rope you need," he said.

Before my mind's eyes flashed a picture of a courtroom, of a judge pronouncing sentence, of a white cell in the death house and the little walk that ended in a stout awkward chair where the straps held you tight as the electricity blew your cells asunder. Me—dead! Never!

Something snapped in my brain, I screamed shrilly. Blindly I sprang at him. At that instant a tide wave struck

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the boat a terrific slap. Larrabee, his feet encumbered by the sack, swayed. The gun muzzle no longer covered me. Like a flash my arm went out, grabbed his wrist, my body lunged forward. I wanted to tear him to pieces.

We fell with a crash into the cockpit. Insensate rage made my one hand tear at his throat. I was unconquerable, I, Arnold Reese, would still laugh at these all. Before my onslaught he could do nothing. My fingers sank into his throat. I laughed at his efforts to wriggle loose.

"You fool!" I yelled. "I don't know how you did this, but you'll never tell any one else about it."

He spoke no word, but his legs were coming out of the sack and twining around mine in a scissors grip that I could not break. His back arched and suddenly he wrenched upward with his torso, threw my own body high, and his one leg came up in that brief space of time and the bony cap of his knee struck me in the groin.

A dizzy wave of pain swept me. But I did not relent. This was the last convulsion of a dying man. I clung to my grip. Suddenly he relaxed. I yelled with joy. I wrenched the gun from his hand and drew back to blow him to hell.

In that split-second he bounded upright. A terrific blow caught me alongside the head. I swayed. I fired the gun, but my arm was not level. The spitting flash merely showed him charging at me. Another blow. I fell to the cockpit. I could not think; I could not see.

Faintly I heard a shrill blast of a whistle. Out of the night voices yelled. There was the ripping roar of a motorboat under full way. I staggered to my knees, swinging wildly, trying to level the gun. My hand was seized. Another blow caught me flush on the chin. I went backward, tasting salt blood. The gun was jerked from my hand.

The jaw blow had practically paralyzed me. I lay there, incapable of movement even when another motorboat came alongside and I heard the metallic rasp of a boat-hook.

"Got him, Steve?" yelled a voice.

"Sure," Larrabee called.

"Any trouble?"

Larrabee laughed. "Trouble, with a hundred and twenty pound rat! Who are you kidding?"

I heard no more.

CHAPTER VIII

Retribution

I HAVE no clear recollection of what immediately followed. I was taken to the Tombs and a physician came and administered a hypodermic. It seems I was shouting and screaming then. After the prick of the needle I remembered no more until much later.

It was daytime, I know, for light streamed through the barred window, and I heard traffic rumble on Centre Street. Then a guard unlocked the cell door and Detective Larrabee came in. But I did not look at him. Behind him came Mara Daggart. I yelled, sprang up and threw myself at the girl. Larrabee tossed me back.

"You betrayed me, Mara Daggert," I yelled.

She merely stared. I quieted.

"Well, Reese," Larrabee said, "are you ready to tell us all about it in writing?"

I stared at Mara. Even now I loved her. "Why did you do it, Mara?" She still stared at me, loathing unspeakable written on her face.

Larrabee said, "She's what we call sucker bait, Reese. She's a clever little actress, though, I expect, she didn't have to be too clever to fool you. The minute I suspected you killed your adopted

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father and mother, I sicked her on to you. Every time she went to your apartment she searched a portion of it."

He drew things from his pocket. "Recognize these?"

There was my silencer, the bullet fired into the fireplace. I came off the bunk with a scream, full of hatred, but Larrabee pushed me back.

"Easy, man," he said. "You're caught with the goods. If you weren't going to be indicted for the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Reese, you could be had for the attempt on Tucky Wiener."

I sat silent. Wiener! Of course, I had struck him down, yet Larrabee came out of the bag.

"Wiener!" I muttered. "He—"

"Wiener was working with me," but in Larrabee. "Just the old stool pigeon stuff that you fell for. You see, Reese, there wasn't enough evidence to convict you for the murder of your adopted father and mother. But you could be forced to try again; guys like you always do. So I put him up to it. Some more sucker bait."

He paused, watching me with those disconcerting blue eyes.

"You used to go in and out of your laboratory window as you did the night you killed two nice old people. Well, I could come and go, too. I was watching you when you struck down Wiener. Good thing his hat was padded. That was a wallop. Mara rang your bell, called you downstairs, so I could get into the bag. I knew a braggart of your type would say something that would be evidence."

THEN, bit by bit, he re-enacted my crime before my eyes, even to the use of ethyl-chloride in the beginning. It was amazing. I finally said, "How did you know about the ethyl-chloride?"

He grinned at me, but it was a grin without mirth.

"What I can't understand in you who call yourself a great scientist," he said, "is that you didn't stop to think that ethyl-chloride can be detected in the blood and the lung tissue."

He snorted. "I had a post-mortem made before we surrendered the bodies to you for burial, and found the ethyl-chloride. That's how I knew it was murder."

He sighed. "You dumb amateurs—you always miss out where you think you're smartest."

He stung me. I drew back, snarling. What right had he, who had had phenomenal luck, to criticize one whose brain was equal to anything? A rage shook me.

He said, "Do you want to get it all down in writing?"

In my fury I saw just what I should do. Write down the story from its inception, show them how a perfect murder had been tripped by the stupid luck of a nitwit detective.

"Yes, I'll write it down," I yelled, "and people will see that you were only lucky." I laughed at him. "You couldn't have proved how I killed Mr. and Mrs. Reese, if I were not willing to tell you."

He exchanged stares with Mara. "Can you tie it?" he asked. "Okay, Reese, go ahead. There's a dictaphone and a steno taking it all down."

I spoke for an hour or more, going into every detail of thought, motive, and how I met every emergency. I knew as I talked that I was condemning myself to death in the electric chair. But I did not fear death. It was a mere dissolution, a long sleep.

"There," I said at the conclusion, "there is a story that will make people gasp."

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Larrabee really laughed. "Imagine!" he said to Mara. "He thinks this routine murder is remarkable. Well, I suppose all murderers think their crime is the best just like all fathers think their babies are the best."

I sprang at him, but he twisted my arm and threw me screaming onto the bunk.

All day after he had left I brooded over what he had said about my perfect crime being dumb and routine. Well, I had a way to show them. I would will my brain to the Stanton Foundation so that they could see what a genius's brain looked like. I would go to the chair laughing over a joke to prove to them that death had no terrors for the informed mind not shrouded in superstition. This would show Larrabee and the world that I was a great man. Indeed, now that I had to die I would make a spectacle of it. I wanted to die. This being cooped up in a cell was worse than death.

I drew my will. When the reporters came I told them the story of my brain. I amplified on it when other scientific-looking men with glasses came and asked me many questions and rapped me with a rubber hammer. When this man, Frederick C. Painton, came to write my story for a magazine I gladly agreed.

"Show the world the kind of genius I am," I told him.

"Sure," he said, "just keep on talking."

"My trial," I said, "will be on the front pages of all the newspapers of the world."

"Sure," he agreed, taking notes.

THE day of my trial arrived. I dressed and shaved and took care of myself better than usual. I would show the world. Here was my moment of spotlight, that the people should know what sort of man can take life and laugh. Guards took me to the courtroom.

But there was no trial! The spectacled physicians came into court and spoke with the judge. Other men came and conversed.

The district attorney merely looked at me and said, "I abide by the unanimous opinion of the psychoanalysts, Your Honor, though I am convinced that such an inhuman maniac should be destroyed rather than kept alive."

Inhuman! Maniac! What were they talking about? I found out two days later. The judge committed me to life confinement in the Hospital for the Criminal Insane at Matteawan. Me! Insane! They were all mad. I insisted on a trial. I demanded the capital punishment. To die the cynosure of all eyes, as having committed a great crime, that I could take and smile.

But to be confined in a white, bleak room, this is worse than death. Endless days, tortured nights. A prisoner. Never to be free!

I tried to take my own life. But they had denied me even a hairpin. My knives and forks were of paper. My clothes so ragged I could not even hang myself on their strength. I tried to butt my brains out. They put me in a padded cell.

Day after day I screamed and cursed and tore my hair and scratched my skin, hoping for infection. Physicians cauterized my self-made wounds. At this rate I would go mad. Images came into my brain. Mad images that made me cower, then laugh and shriek at my own idiocy.

I was a slavering nervous wreck when Frederick C. Painton came to take notes on what he called the end of my story.

"Get me out of here," I cried to him through the bars. "I cannot stand this.

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The others are mad. They talk like insane fools. One thinks he is Napoleon. Another—my God, in pity's name get me out of here."

"I can't get you out of here," Painton told me. "Nobody can. You have to pay the price."

"This price, I can't," I yelled. "Smuggle me in a pin—just a little pin that I can stab into my carotid artery."

"I'm carefully searched before I can get in," he explained.

I tried to snatch at his pencil through the bars. He stepped back.

"Let them shoot me, let them see how a genius can die," I cried.

He shook his head. Frantically I jerked at the steel bars. "Then let them give me my laboratory to work in. Let them use my great brain. Don't you know that I am the great Charles Darwin, brought back to life? I am the man who invented evolution. I wrote the Origin of the Species. I am descended from Julius Cæsar himself. A brain like mine occurs once in a hundred years. I am Julius Cæsar."

But he was not listening. He had gone away. I sobbed and hurled myself at the door. Freedom without and even death denied to me within. But I am Julius Cæsar and I shall outwit them. I shall be free.

AUTHOR'S NOTE: Arnold Reese is still alive, and confined to the State Hospital for the Criminal Insane in Matteawan.

Rackets in Business

THE Law says that, in collection cases, the innocent third party must be paid. That furnishes the base for a racket wherein the victim, usually a retail dealer, is induced to order merchandise under the belief that its sale is guaranteed and that extensive advertising is to be done in promotion work. The racketeers selling the merchandise secure notes from the merchant and sell these notes to a third party. The racketeers keep none of their promises, the merchant cannot dispose of the merchandise generally, but he must pay because the Law empowers the innocent third party to collect.

—*John Berry.*

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TRUE SHORT
DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

"Lizzie's been trying to talk to me—she's dead!"

A Midsummer Night's Murder Dream

By Glenn Garrison

A SCUDDING cloud whisked away and a silvery stream of moonlight flooded the bedroom of the small, quiet farmhouse. It revealed Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burton, a widow, tossing violently on a large four-poster bed. She clutched at the sheets and suddenly she sat up with a strangled scream.

As Mrs. Burton Dreamed of Her Daughter's Murder Many Miles Away, It Was Actually Happening! And She Also Recognized the Fiendish, Brutal Murderer!

"Don't!" she choked. "Don't! Please don't! Don't murder my daughter! Lizzie! Lizzie! The pine trees! Stay away from the pine trees!"

Her horror-glazed eyes cleared and she

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was awake. But her dream had been so vivid and so overpoweringly real that some minutes elapsed before she could convince herself that she had not actually witnessed the murder of her daughter. She gazed at the familiar objects of furniture clearly outlined by the moonlight, trying to reassure herself. There was an old chest of drawers, a straight wooden chair, and a pine dressing table. Her faded calico dress was thrown over the chair.

The time was the hot summer night of Sunday, June 12, 1870. And one of the eerie and almost incredible circumstances of Mrs. Burton's dream was that she could not have possibly known that her daughter, Lizzie, had been murdered on this very day. Mrs. Burton lived near Dedham, Maine, and her daughter resided at Lewiston many miles distant. But now the mother could not shake off an overwhelming premonition of evil.

She climbed out of bed and with a shaking arm lighted a candle. A gentle summer's breeze drifted in and Mrs. Burton shivered as if an icy hand had clutched her.

"That's the wind!" she muttered. "The wind I heard in my dream. It made the pine trees wave over Lizzie. They bent over her dead body!"

Dreams have played strange parts in murders, but none more remarkable than this dream of Mrs. Burton's. She dreamed her dream on the Sunday her daughter was murdered. She could not have known what had happened to Lizzie. But Mrs. Burton's distress—her belief in the truth of her dream—was so great that she soon wrote an account of it to her friend Mrs. Murrey of Lewiston.

More than three years afterwards, on October 18, 1873, her astounding letter was reprinted in the Lewiston *Journal*. It created an immense sensation for it was on the eve of the trial of a man for the murder of Mrs. Burton's daughter. There seems to be no logical explanation for the uncanny dream. But those who talk of ghosts and ghouls and specters were insistent that Lizzie's wraith had visited her mother. And here is what Mrs. Burton dreamed—

"It seemed as if I was in Lewiston," she wrote her friend, Mrs. Murrey, "on a river road, and near some mills. I did not see any mills but something seemed to say: 'There are mills here.' As I was on this road, all at once, I saw a wagon ahead and I said to myself, 'That is Jim and Lizzie.'

"I wondered why they were out there riding together. I seemed to keep along behind them up the road, with the river on one side, and all the woods. Then Jim turned off the river road into a by-road—into a pasture as it seemed to me—sort of a pasture road. Then I lost sight of them, when they disappeared in a thicket of pines.

"Then I saw Lizzie on the ground and Jim standing over her. She was pleading for her life. I heard her say —'Oh, don't murder me!' She was holding up her arm. Then her arm dropped by her side.

"She sank down. He had his hand raised up as if to strike her. I tried to get to them, but a thick fog seemed between us. I could see the pines waving over her. They were not large pines, but thick, and she seemed to be lying upon sidling ground.

"Nights, when the wind blows now, it wakes me up, and I think of the pines over Lizzie!"

The Jim, who Mrs. Burton so vividly dreamed had raised his hand to murder her daughter, was Jim Lowell of Lewiston, Maine. In 1870, he was

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twenty-seven years old and his occupation was that of a teamster. In 1867, three years before the mother's dream, he had met Lizzie Burton in Lewiston. Two months afterwards they were living together as man and wife and were supposedly married.

BUT Mrs. Burton knew that her daughter's life was not the open book that the inhabitants of Lewiston thought it was. Lizzie, who was a year older than Jim, had previously married a spirited, adventurous man named Nichols who had deserted her to seek gold in California. And Lizzie had never actually obtained a divorce from Nichols.

The mother remembered the violent quarrels that had taken place between Lizzie and her first husband. She knew of Nichols' fits of violent temper and jealous rages. She had heard that Jim and Lizzie had separated. She had wondered if Nichols had returned from California and was making trouble. And when she awoke screaming from her dreadful dream on this hot June Sunday of 1870, Mrs. Burton could not still her terror. Her hands were trembling with apprehension when she lighted a candle.

She could not rid her mind of the overwhelming belief that in some supernatural manner she had actually witnessed the murder of her daughter. She believed that while the actual happenings in her dream were true, she might have been confused as to the identity of the murderer. She knew that on her old pine table there were two letters recently received from Jim Lowell. And now she decided to reread the letters in the hope that they might, in some way, tell her what steps she should take.

The letters were remarkable and interesting ones and are worthy of the most careful attention. They were exhibits in the famous murder trial that took place over three years later. To put it mildly they showed marked peculiarities in both spelling and punctuation. The first one was marked exhibit "L," when it was placed in evidence at the trial. It was dated several weeks before the murder.

May the 20 1870

Dear mother

I thought i would rite you a few lines to let you no that lyzie has left me again and afor what reson i dont no. it is no use to try to live with her for i cant think Just so much of her. i saw georga to Day She said She had not seane her if She has come home rite and tell me for i should like to know. tell her to have picture taken and Send me. So good By.

J. M. Lowell

rite as soon as you get this i dont think She used me very well in going of in the way that She did. She told miss Clark thet she was going to Live with her first husbun. i have not told you all. i may come and See you Some time and tell you all about it.

The second letter that Mrs. Burton now re-read was written exactly a week before her dream and before her daughter was murdered. This was also placed in evidence at the trial.

June the 5 1870

Dear mother i sea my Self to rite you a few lines to Let you no that She has come back. we are all well and i hope these few lines will find you the Same. we are coming down in a few weeks So good by and good Luck.

from James M Lowell

rite as soon as you get this.

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But the news of the supposed reconciliation contained in this last letter did nothing to drive away Mrs. Burton's great fright. She was convinced that her daughter's wraith had visited her in her dream. She was sure that Lizzie had been murdered. She thought of Nichols, the first husband, and of Jim Lowell. She had heard that a circus was visiting Lewiston and she remembered her daughter's liking for such attractions. Perhaps a fiendish circus man had rained blows upon her daughter.

Mrs. Burton raised the flickering candle and stared fearfully about the room. A shiver raced up and down her spine. She felt the presence of an invisible force.

In the pale moonlight she walked to the window as if drawn by a powerful magnet. She gazed into the dark shadows outside. Just then a summer breeze whipped through the tall trees towering over the small farmhouse. Mrs. Burton convulsively sprang for the bed and hid her face in its covers. She sobbed, gaspingly, as if her heart would break.

"That's the breeze in the pines!" she moaned. "Lizzie's been trying to talk to me. She's dead! I know she's been murdered! She's lying under some pines. I can hear them. I can see them waving over her body!"

ON the Sunday, June 12, 1870, that Mrs. Burton had her dream —the day her daughter was murdered—there was a great fire in the town of Lewiston, Maine. Central Hall, one of the city's largest buildings, broke into flames early in the morning. By mid-afternoon it had burned to the ground.

Most of the inhabitants of Lewiston and farmers from the surrounding country gathered to watch the conflagration. It is said that Lizzie Burton's first husband, Nichols, was there to view the blaze. Several circus roustabouts from the show the preceding day pushed and milled about the crowd. And among the spectators were Jim and Lizzie Lowell. There were plenty of witnesses who could swear to their presence. But the husband and wife were on opposite sides of the street.

"Damn you, Lizzie!" Jim called to his wife. "Why'd you pick up an' leave me? That ain't no way to treat a man!"

"You never acted like no real man!" Lizzie cried back. "You don't know how. Maybe if you did, it woulda been different!"

The two shouted at each other for a few minutes and then Lizzie left to return to the home of Mrs. Sophronia Blood at 10 Hill Corporation, where she lived and worked. Jim ambled down the street and shortly after six o'clock, he reappeared driving a white horse and buggy. He went to Mrs. Blood's and Lizzie, having done her household chores, came out and joined him.

Jim flicked his white horse and with Lizzie drove through the streets of Lewiston where many people saw them. On the edge of the town they turned into Switzerland Road which led out to the countryside. And on this same night, many miles away, Mrs. Burton dreamed her dreadful dream. Mrs. Burton had not seen her daughter for months, knew nothing of the drive and nothing of the presence of the first husband and the circus roustabouts. She was totally unfamiliar with the country surrounding Lewiston.

On the next morning, Monday, Jim Lowell resumed his work as a teamster.

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He was driving his horses by Mrs. Blood's home when the housewife shouted at him and waved to him to stop. She ran down her porch steps and came to the gate of her front yard.

"Where's your wife? What's happened to Lizzie?" she called to Jim.

Jim Lowell flicked at a dandelion with his whip.

"You ought to know," he answered. "I left her by here at ten o'clock last night."

Mrs. Blood's eyes sparkled with anger.

"You didn't leave Lizzie by here," she retorted. "There's no use telling me you did. Usually I lock up at ten o'clock at night. But last night when Lizzie didn't come in I waited until almost eleven. You didn't leave Lizzie by here. I was up. I know you didn't!"

Jim stared hard at Mrs. Blood.

"Well," he said, "I know I left Lizzie by here. I heard the town clock strike ten when I did. There was a circus in town Saturday night—the Great Australian Circus. I took Lizzie to see it. An' she seemed mighty struck by some of them circus fellows. Too struck for my liking. If Lizzie ain't showed up I believe she's run off with one of them damned circus fellows."

Mrs. Blood's face clearly expressed her disbelief.

"Lizzie ain't that type," she said, "and you know it. You shouldn't be spreading such tales about her. Now you go an' find Lizzie an' tell her to hurry up and come here. I got work for her to do."

BUT Lizzie Lowell did not return to Mrs. Blood's for she was destined never to work again for the housewife or for anyone else. Her disappearance started strange rumors and as Jim Lowell drove his team about the streets of Lewiston he was questioned time and again about the whereabouts of his wife.

But he stuck resolutely to the story he had told Mrs. Blood.

"Lizzie ran off with one of them damn circus fellows," he asserted boldly. "I knew she did an' I followed the circus to Portland. I got me a policeman, so as I could get Lizzie back. But they said the circus had gone away an' took Lizzie with it. I know Lizzie's left me for good. I don't ever expect to see her again."

In the meantime Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burton, Lizzie's mother, had dreamed her strange, sinister dream. And now every night when Mrs. Burton went to bed and heard the wind in the trees a spectral picture would arise and float weirdly about in her dark bedroom. She would see the dead body of her daughter sprawled out in a grove of pine trees.

And as the wind blew the pines waved and bent over Lizzie. Through the voice of the whispering pines the dead girl seemed, in some occult manner, to be trying desperately to communicate with her mother.

Mrs. Burton then knew nothing of her daughter's murder. But her alarm was so great that she immediately communicated with her friends in Lewiston. She wrote them of her dream and of her supernatural visitations. She implored them to give her reassuring news of her daughter. When she heard that Lizzie had mysteriously vanished she broke into hysterical sobbing.

She soon recovered. Her face was grim and her eyes were hard. She immediately wrote Jim Lowell demanding that he tell her exactly what had

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happened. And this is Jim Lowell's reply—

August the 4 1870

Dear mother i take this opportunity to answer your kind Leter witch i got a few days ago and was glad to hear from you. i hav not heard from lizza sence She went away only whot a girl told me. She told me that She saw her after the forth. She told her that she was going to leave the place for good and never would never see her a gain for she would never rite to me. georga was out here last weeke and i have not scene since, give my love to all and a Large shere to your self. So good By and good Luck.

from James M. Lowell

i am coming down in a few weeks

The "Large shere" of love which Jim Lowell sent to his mother-in-law was emphatically not returned. As soon as she received this letter Mrs. Burton's mouth clamped tight and there was icy menace in her eyes. She packed up and immediately departed for Lewiston. She arrived there in the latter part of August, many weeks after Lizzie had vanished.

II

MRS. BURTON walked up and down the streets of Lewiston until she saw Jim Lowell drive by with his team. Her face had been streaked with weariness but now it lighted up with a grim determination.

"You Jim Lowell!" she cried. "Stop that team! Get off that wagon! I want to talk to you!"

From his high driver's seat Jim Lowell's eyes flicked to the left. He saw his mother-in-law and his lips drew back in a snarl. He whipped up his horses. But, Mrs. Burton, her eyes blazing, ran down the street shouting to him. Lowell hastily drew his team up and dashed into a store. It was there that Mrs. Burton confronted him. She was trembling with rage and suspicion.

"Where is my daughter?" she demanded. "What have you done to Lizzie?"

Jim Lowell rubbed his thick lower lip and glared at his mother-in-law.

"Lizzie's left Lewiston," he snapped. "She's gone over to Lawrence in Massachusetts."

"Where does she live in Lawrence?"

"I don't know," Jim said. "I ain't never heard from her. A man named Charlie told me he had seen her over there."

"Where does this Charlie live? What is his last name?"

"It's Charlie something or other," Jim told his mother-in-law. "I jus' ain't able to recollect his other name. But he lives around here somewheres. I don't exactly recollect where. I'll be seeing him soon an' I'll let you know."

Mrs. Burton stared at her son-in-law.

"I won't talk any more with a murderer!" she exclaimed.

She abruptly walked out of the store and started for No. 10 Hill Corporation, the home of Mrs. Sophronia Blood, Lizzie's former employer. She wanted to get her daughter's clothes and to see if Mrs. Blood could give her any news of Lizzie. She found the housewife in a highly-enraged state of mind.

"Read this!" Mrs. Sophronia Blood screeched. "Read this letter! I picked it up in my back yard two weeks after your pore Lizzie disappeared."

The letter was addressed to Miss Blood and read as follows—

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Dear friend

Tell my Dear beloved husbun that he will never see me again. i hav don wrong. i have Lied a bout him. he never used me bad but once. i want you to see him and tell him i want you to giv him all of my clothes. tell that girl that goes with Savage that i want her to cort Jimy and have him. She can never get a better one. tell Jennie to kiss Jimmy three times for me.

Lizzie

Mrs. Burton's eyes were glued to the letter.

"If Lizzie wrote this," she started, "my dream was wrong an' Lizzie's alive. Maybe. . . ."

"If-Lizzie wrote it!" Mrs. Sophronia Blood screamed. "She didn't write it. I know who wrote it and so do you!"

She was a large, ample woman. And now the blood in her temples throbbed from rage.

"'Tell Jennie to kiss Jimmy three times for me,'" she roared the quotation from the letter. "Tell my pretty daughter Jennie to kiss that worthless, shiftless, no-account, woman-chasing James Lowell. I'll kiss him with an axe if I ever see him foolin' around here!"

MRS. BURTON was convinced by Mrs. Sophronia Blood's outburst. And the letter added fuel to the fire in Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burton's heart. "Give Jim Lowell all of Lizzie's clothes!" she bellowed. "Tell that girl that goes with Savage that Lizzie wants her to court Jimmy an' have him. She can never get a better one!"

Tiny imps of fire seemed to dance in her eyes.

"I'll say Savage's girl can never get a worse one!" she screeched. "Lizzie never wrote that letter. Jim Lowell wrote it hisself. An' I'm goin' to see that Jim Lowell goes to the gallows where he belongs!"

Mrs. Burton departed hastily and sped to the office of the city marshal. She marched in on the official with her eyes blazing.

"Arrest Jim Lowell for murder!" she demanded. "He's done away with my daughter, Lizzie!"

The official sat up straight. "Murder!" he exclaimed. "I knew your daughter had disappeared. I didn't know she was murdered. Where is her body?"

"It's in a grove of pines alongside of a pasture-road," Mrs. Burton told him. "I saw it in a dream. I saw Jim Lowell murder Lizzie. He raised his hand an' struck her down. Lizzie's now lying under the pines. She's dead. But every night when the wind blows she tries to talk to me!"

The city marshal asked a number of pointed questions and finally shook his head. He could not, he pointed out to Mrs. Burton, arrest Jim Lowell on evidence supplied only by a dream. No one seemed to know what had really happened to Lizzie. Maybe she had rejoined her first husband. Maybe she had actually run away with a circus fellow as Jim Lowell claimed.

Mrs. Burton finally left and with angry, puzzled eyes returned to her home in Dedham. On her first night the air was calm, and she went to bed with a feeling of relief. Her dream, she tried to persuade herself, had no real significance. Lizzie was alive and well and would soon write home.

But during the night a wind arose and swept through the tall trees outside the quiet farmhouse. Mrs. Burton awoke with a scream. She saw float-

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ing in the air a misty, spectral picture of a pasture road and a grove of thick pines. She saw her daughter's mute body sprawled out underneath the trees. And the whisper of the wind in the leaning, waving pines seemed to convey an unmistakable but unintelligible message to her.

"What is it, Lizzie?" Mrs. Burton sobbed brokenly. "What do you want to tell me? I have done everything I can. What is it? What do you want me to do?"

The wind died down and the whispering trees were still. The spectral picture melted into the blackness of the room. But on many gusty nights thereafter Mrs. Burton was racked by this same vivid vision.

THE days passed into months and then into a year. Another year went by. The name of Lizzie Lowell was rarely mentioned in Lewiston and her memory became fainter and fainter. Conjecture as to her fate was no longer a live topic. But the few who kept her memory green were divided into three camps. Some insisted she had run away with a circus roustabout. Others were positive that Jim Lowell had in some mysterious way done away with her. And a few were vehement in their belief that she had rejoined her first husband.

And late in 1872 Jim Lowell moved from Lewiston to Lawrence, Massachusetts. He married a girl there, worked occasionally as a teamster, and continued his pursuit of such women as would listen to him.

About the time that Jim Lowell moved away, John N. Small of Lewiston, began to cut wood from a piece of property he owned. The property was a triangular parcel of land located just beyond Switzerland Road along which Lizzie Lowell had been last seen driving with Jim behind a white horse. John N. Small's soil was covered by a large grove of thick pine trees. And along one side ran a rambling road.

John N. Small cut down a number of his pine trees and on the 15th of October, 1873, more than three years after the disappearance of Lizzie Lowell, he decided to haul some of his cut wood away. He was pushing through a tangled thicket when suddenly he jumped back with a startled cry of horror.

He saw spread out before him the skeleton of what he indistinctly knew was a human being. He looked closer. He saw a pair of rotted shoes, the faded remnants of a dress, some buttons and the hoop from a skirt. The skeleton was almost covered by leaves and pine needles. It lay under the branches of close-growing pines.

As Small gazed at it in fright, a breeze sprang up and the whispering pines bent low over the body. For the moment Small stood rooted to the ground gripped by a mysterious terror. And then he crashed wildly through the thicket to the road. He sprang into his wagon and whipped up his horses.

In a short time he returned with H. H. Richardson, the city marshal, and with Ham Brooks, the coroner. A number of other town folks swarmed to the spot. The coroner, after taking a searching look at the grisly remains, gazed about in perplexity.

"The head!" he exclaimed. "Where is the head?"

The closest scrutiny failed to discover the head of the skeleton and the remains were removed to a city building in Lewiston. On the afternoon of the same day, October 15, the coroner's

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inquest was held. Lewiston inhabitants flocked to the proceedings to try and solve the mystery of the gruesome discovery. They stared with bulging eyes and finally one woman cried out—"I believe that's Lizzie Lowell, Jim Lowell's wife! She dropped outa sight more'n three years ago. It seems to me that she had a dress mighty like the one you've found! And a black silk sack like this."

But the coroner shook his head with dissatisfaction.

"Yes," he said, "it might be like it. But how do we know it's the same dress? And this corpse ain't got a head. We're goin' to have the devil of a time proving who it is!"

However the coroner's jury brought in a verdict that the remains were those of Lizzie Lowell and that she had been murdered by a "person or persons unknown." The city marshal ordered E. D. Wiggin, a Lewiston policeman, to go to Lawrence and arrest Jim Lowell for the murder of his first wife. But a prominent criminal lawyer expressed the thought of a large part of the community. "Suppose Jim Lowell's arrested," he declared, "what good will that do? They've got to identify the remains to prove he murdered Lizzie."

WIGGIN arrived in Lawrence on October 17, 1873, two days after the discovery of the skeleton. He saw Jim Lowell driving a team of horses and shouted to him to stop and get down from the wagon. He showed Lowell a newspaper clipping which told of the gruesome find. Lowell's jaw went slack and his eyes were glassy. His hands trembled.

"What have you got to say about this?" Wiggin demanded.

"Nothing."

"What did you do with your wife's head?"

"I don't know nothing about this," Lowell told the policeman. "The last time I heard of Lizzie was when a fellow told me he saw her in New York."

"What is this fellow's name?"

"I don't just exactly recollect what it is," Lowell replied. "It was John something or other. I ain't seed him since."

Wiggin's hand clamped on Lowell's shoulder. "James Lowell, I arrest you for the murder of your wife!"

The policeman put his prisoner on a train and started with him for Lewiston. And when the train pulled in a large and excited crowd milled about the station.

"What's all the fuss about?" Lowell asked.

"It's hard to say," Wiggin told him, "unless maybe it's a big picnic."

"I'd say it's a circus," Lowell snapped, "and I'm the elephant."

But although there was a great outcry of hoots and jeers Lowell was not otherwise molested by the crowd. He was immediately taken to the city jail and locked up. And in the afternoon of the next day, October 18, the Lewiston *Journal* appeared on the street carrying a printed copy of the astounding letter Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burton had written more than three years ago, the letter, previously quoted, which told of her weird and eerie dream, which said in part: "It seemed as if I was on a road in Lewiston—I saw a wagon ahead and said to myself, 'That is Jim and Lizzie.' Then Jim turned off the River Road and disappeared into a thicket of pines. Then I saw Lizzie on the ground and Jim standing over her—I heard her say, 'Oh, don't murder me!' She sank down. He had raised his hand as if to

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strike her. I tried to get to them but a thick fog seemed between us."

It created a tremendous sensation. Knots of people gathered on the streets in excited discussion.

"There's no doubt about it!" many exclaimed. "Lizzie spoke to her mother from the grave! There's no accounting for it otherwise. Look! The body was found just where Lizzie told her mother to search. Underneath some thick pine trees alongside of a pasture road. And Mrs. Burton had her dream just after poor murdered Lizzie was put there."

Others admitted that they could think of no logical explanation for the extraordinary dream.

And one man expressed a general apprehension.

"If Lizzie was seekin' vengeance," he declared, "she's liable to be disappointed. They ain't proved murder on Jim Lowell. They ain't even found Lizzie's head."

MRS. BURTON, herself, arrived in Lewiston two days after Jim Lowell's arrest. She went immediately to the jail and was admitted to Lowell's cell. She thrust a piece of the skeleton's dress before the prisoner's face.

"Jim Lowell!" she snapped. "I want you to look at this dress! You've seen one like it on Lizzie, haven't you?"

Jim Lowell's eyes moved across the ceiling and then darted to the floor. He would not look at Mrs. Burton or at the gruesome evidence.

"I ain't never seen a dress like that," he declared. "The last time I seen Lizzie she was wearing somethin' different."

"You lie, Jim Lowell!" Mrs. Burton cried. "You murdered my daughter an' you know you did! She came to me in my dreams an' told me so!"

After a number of delays Jim Lowell was finally brought to trial for his life on Tuesday February 10, 1874. The Hon. Charles W. Walton was the judge who presided. Lowell was defended by two able attorneys, Eben F. Pillsbury and M. T. Ludden.

The defense made much of the prosecution's weakest point—the proof of the identity of the skeleton. And medical experts testified that the missing head had not been chopped off. The bones of the neck were not scarred as they would have been if the head had been cut off by clumsy hands.

The question of what had happened to the head was also raised by the defense. It was claimed that if Lowell had severed it, had hidden it, he would also have done away with the dress, shoes and other identifying objects.

The prosecution used medical experts to prove that the skeleton was that of a woman of Lizzie Lowell's relative height and age. And many women witnesses testified that the dress, other articles of clothing, and some small ornaments found near the skeleton had been worn by Lizzie. The letters which have been reprinted here and several others supposedly written by Lizzie were introduced as evidence. They had a damning effect on Jim Lowell's cause.

And one of the greatest allies of the prosecution was Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burton's eerie, startling dream. The whole community knew of it. Most of the townspeople were confident that it was an actual, ghostly visitation made for the purpose of insuring that justice be done. The effect of this uncanny dream permeated the atmosphere of the crowded courtroom. In an intangible, weird manner it seemed to give

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an air of finality to the whole proceedings.

The case went to the jury on Thursday, February 19, 1874. At ten o'clock the following morning Jim Lowell stood at the bar to hear its verdict—murder in the first degree.

And on May 6, he was again brought before the court to hear Judge Walton pronounce his sentence:

"That you, James M. Lowell, be removed from this place to the State Prison at Thomaston, in the county of Knox; that within the walls, or enclosed yard, of said prison, at such time after the expiration of one year from this day, as the supreme executive authority of this State, by a warrant under the great seal thereof, shall direct, you be hanged by the neck till you are dead; and that you be kept in confinement in said prison till this sentence of death shall be inflicted upon you."

Lowell went back to jail, white-lipped and glassy-eyed. His former bravado had completely disappeared. Shortly afterward, he made a confession, and a large part of it was probably true.

"On that Sunday evening that me and Lizzie went driving," he said, in effect, "we had a big quarrel. I got sore an' pushed Lizzie outa the wagon. When she fell to the ground she broke her neck. But I didn't kill her deliberate like."

This accounted for the defense's contention that the missing head had not been hacked from the body. But what actually happened to the head remains to this day one of the weird riddles of this case.

Lowell's death sentence was eventually commuted by the Governor of Maine to life imprisonment. He served over forty years in the State Prison at Thomaston. And then, finally, shortly after the World War began, he was released. He was an old and broken man and he left Thomaston to vanish in obscurity.

After the trial Mrs. Sarah Elizabeth Burton returned to her quiet farmhouse at Dedham. Her first night was a gusty one, but she went to bed with a feeling of peace. It is said that after Jim Lowell's conviction for the murder of her daughter, she always slept soundly at night. She never again was troubled by the spectral vision of the lonely pasture road, the whispering pines and the murdered body of her daughter.

Ancients Abhorred Perjury

PERJURY, which, although one of the prime factors in the breakdown of justice today, almost invariably goes unpunished in this country, was visited with drastic penalties by the ancients. The Roman found guilty of perjury was dashed to death over a rock; the Persian perjurer's tongue was cut out at the root. But even these savage punishments could not eradicate the evil, for perjury was quite as common then as it is today.

—*John L. Considine.*

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Civil Service Q & A

By "G-2"

Could You Qualify as—

Special Agent (G-Man)	Police Patrolman
Secret Service Operative	Police Detective
Post Office Inspector	Policewoman
Customs Patrol	Fingerprint Expert
Immigration Patrol	State Trooper
Anti-Narcotic Agent	Crime Prevention Investigator
Parole Investigator	Probation Officer
Prison Keeper	Criminologist
Internal Revenue Agent	Police Radio Expert
Alcohol Tax Agent	

This department will give you every week typical questions asked in civil service examinations.

Prison Work as a Career

STEADY increase in the population of penal and correctional institutions maintained by cities, states and the federal government has called for the employment of thousands of additional prison keepers, guards and officers, during the last ten years. The building of new prisons and the enlargement of old ones will create still other opportunities for employment for men who have an aptitude for this type of work, and for competent women to serve as matrons, guards and keepers in correctional institutions for female offenders.

The old type of brutal, ignorant prison employee is fast passing from the scene, chiefly because Civil Service has eliminated him and penology has become a science. The new type of prison and reformatory is a thoroughly modernized institution where effort is made to rehabilitate rather than harden offenders. The segregation of offenders into professional or habitual evil-doers on one hand, and first offenders on the other, is responsible for the new types of prisons and new types of officials to man them. In nearly all recent Civil Service tests given to men and women seeking employment in these institutions, the questions given indicate that a candidate must possess the aptitude to work with prisoners, but also must possess a knowledge of modern penology though they need not be honor graduates from a university or high school.

In normal years the federal government appoints an average of from 150 to 325 men to prison jobs as guards, paying them to start from $1,680 to $1,860 a year, with living quarters and subsistence furnished. The age limit is 25 to 45 years, minimum height 5 feet 6 inches without boots or shoes, minimum weight 135 pounds without clothing. Health must be sound and physical condition good. Vision must be 20-40, both eyes combined, and at least 20-50 in the weaker eye without glasses. Candidates must be able to hear at least fifteen feet for ordinary conversation. Military preference applies, and five points are given to candidates who, during the ten years preceding the day of test, have had four years' experience as carpenter, plumber, steamfitter, blacksmith, bricklayer, electrician or farmer. The tests given fed-

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eral prison guards consist of mental tests, spelling, civil government, clerical ability and arithmetic.

The federal government also employs in the field service of the medical hygiene division of the U. S. Public Health Service, a special type of prison guard classified as a medical guard attendant, a job paying $1,620 annually. The duties consist of supervising the care, treatment and custody of federal prisoners, including those who are mentally irresponsible or addicted to drugs. No assembled, written examination is held for these positions. Applicants must be citizens, must have graduated from a recognized school of nursing with at least two years' residence in a hospital giving practical and theoretical training; or three years' active service in the Hospital Corps of the U. S. Army or Navy. Credit for satisfactory experience will be given to candidates who have been guards in a penal or correctional institution, or soldiers, sailors or marines, or as hospital and asylum attendants or journeymen experienced in skilled trades where they have supervised work groups. The age limit is 25 to 45, and the medical and physical requirements are the same as those fixed for the job of prison guard. Men with experience in nursing or as instructors in the various trades seem especially suited to fill these jobs.

Civil Service requirements for the job of guard in state prisons are not uniform, but the standards set by the New York State Civil Service Commission may be considered sufficiently high to meet requirements in most states. Candidates must be of good moral character and habits, mentally sound and alert, not under twenty-one or more than thirty years of age, not less than five feet nine inches in height (in bare feet), and must weigh not less than 155 pounds, stripped. Eyesight must not be poorer than 20.40 without glasses; cleanliness and neatness of person and dress are essential, and the candidate must have the bearing, personality and temperament to command respect and obedience of inmates. Candidates must have had not less than a year of satisfactory, full-time experience in the actual supervision of a group of men, such supervisory experience, for instance, as is acquired as a foreman of laborers, prison guard, police officer or an officer in military service; or they must have had not less than six months of the experience just outlined plus education equivalent to graduation from a standard senior high school. The pay of a state prison guard varies; New York pays $1,800 to start, with an increase of $120 a year up to $2,280. Many states pay less.

Keepers employed in city and county penal and correctional institutions receive from $1,200 to $1,750 annually; as a rule they must be five feet seven inches or taller, and must be in the pink of physical condition. Moreover, in many cities they must submit to a competitive physical examination such as the following: Dumb-bell lift, one hand at a time, a sixty-pound dumb-bell must be raised a full arm's length by sheer muscular effort. Doing this will merit 100 per cent. Abdominal muscle lift; from a reclining position the candidate must assume a sitting position carrying up behind his neck a long forty-pound dumb-bell, his legs being held. Perfect performance rates 100; doing the same with a 35 dumb-bell, 90 per cent; with a 15 dumb-bell, 60 per cent. High jump test, over a rope at three feet four inches counts 100; at three feet 85 per cent; two feet eight inches 70 per cent. Standing firmly on the floor with two levers between his legs, the candidate must give evidence of thigh strength by squeezing together the levers, the percentage recorded on the thigh abductor instrument. Forearm strength is tested in like manner. The final strength test consists of bar chinning; 5 times, 100 per cent; 4 times, 80 per cent; 3 times, 50 per cent; 1 time, 20 per cent. Candidates must attain 75 per cent or above to pass this physical test. In many states, no matter how high a mark the candidate may attain in the written mental tests he will not be accepted unless he passes the physical strength test. And while normal health and physical strength are prime requisites in prison work, prospective candidates for prison and correctional positions should bear in mind that in a great many states guards and keepers also will be employed to instruct prisoners in various trades.

Lack of uniformity in Civil Service tests makes it impossible to supply a sample test that would apply to all cities, states and the federal government. However, the sam-

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ple test which is given below is a composite made up of typical questions asked in recent tests in various parts of the country, and they cover all the subjects upon which a candidate is likely to be examined, as well as other subjects which will be eliminated in some tests, asked in others. Generally speaking, a mark of 75 per cent in each section of the test is required to pass with a final average of 75 as minimum for the entire test. It will be well, however, for the reader who is seriously interested in prison work, and who plans to go in for a prison job, to attain at least 80 per cent in each section of this test. A perfect score in each test would be 100, or 10 points for each correct answer. Thus, to attain a grade of 80 per cent, you must answer correctly eight out of ten questions. Some answers may appear to be debatable, yet the key answers which are given here receive full credit at the hands of Civil Service examiners, and the candidate is bound by the examiners' findings unless he can, on an appeal from the examiners' rulings, prove his answer to be a better one than the one which the examiners have given.

ARITHMETIC. (Ten questions. Where the questions involve showing your work as well as your answer, deduct five points where you fail to work the problem correctly.)

Q 1—You are assigned to work in the prison commissary and instructed to ascertain the total cost for a year of 365 days of feeding 1,200 inmates whose food costs on the average of $1.60 a day. Find the annual cost and show work.

Q 2—What part of a dollar is 33 1/3 cents?

Q 3—A prisoner receives from relatives a sum of $6 for 3 weeks, and on the fourth week he receives $8. He is saving this money until he has $150. How much more does he need from his relatives to reach the $150?

Q 4—From the product of 242.04 and 2.51 subtract the sum of 72.21, .003, 5.112 and show work.

Q 5—A shipment of 600 cans of fruit is received in prison. If this shipment is divided into two parts, and one part contains 2/3rds as many as the other part, how many cans are in the lesser part of the shipment?

Q 6—In the prison furniture factory a belt conveyor travels 100 yards in 25 seconds. It will travel how many feet in 1/4 of a second? Show work.

Q 7—In the month of Sept., 1935, the average number of prisoners received each day was 8; daily average coming in during the month of August was 10. State (a) how many prisoners were received in September; (b) how many in August.

Q 8—The warden purchased a supply of radio outfits at $40 and an equal number of batteries for them at $12. In all he spent $468. How many radios and batteries did he buy?

Q 9—It takes 4 trusties 2 hours to clean a tier of cells. Working under the same conditions in that same tier, how long will it take 8 trusties to do the same job?

Q 10—A regulation cell is square and has an area of 36 square yards. Three feet is added to each side making its area how many square yards?

Other sections of this test will appear next week. Key answers to the arithmetic test: Q 1—$700,800; 1200 x $1.60 x 365 days; Q 2—1/3; Q 3—$124; Q 4—242.04 x 2.51 = 607.5204 minus 77.3250 = 530.1954; Q 5—240 cans; Q 6—100 yds. x 3 feet = 300 feet, divided by 25 = 12 divided by 4 = Ans. 3 feet; Q 7—(a) 240; (b) 310; Q 8—9 of each; Q 9—1 hour; Q 10—49.

SECURITY BOARD JOBS

During August the new Federal Social Security Board, which will administer old age and other forms of security legislation, began to function. One of the first offices was opened in New York City and fifty appointments from Civil Service eligible lists were made. With the opening of this, office announcement was made that all appointments of personnel would be made from Civil Service lists. Most of these positions will be filled from eligible lists of typists, stenographers, statisticians and clerks. It is highly probable that existing eligible lists will be exhausted, and that next year new examinations will be held to furnish new lists.

Next Week—Prison Guard Test

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They're Swindling You!

Racing Tipsters

By Frank Wrentmore

This is the fifty-fourth of a series of articles exposing business rackets that cost you billions of dollars every year! Mr. Wrentmore is an authority on swindles and frauds, well known to legal, financial and commercial associations.—The Editor.

LOUIS GARRISON of New York City in a letter to DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY asks for an article on the so-called Racing Tipster Information Services and with his request he enclosed a summary of his own experience with these swindlers.

It may not be a matter of common knowledge, but it is a fact that the tipster sheets used by stock sharpers to boost the sale of fake stocks are a direct outgrowth of the racing sheets. In 1900 a man, who until that time, was known as Jacob Herzig, organized the racing tipster firm of Maxim & Gay and at the same time adopted the name of George Graham Rice. The Post Office Department put Maxim & Gay out of business, and then Mr. Rice transferred his operations to the field of fake stocks, utilizing the knowledge he had gained in his "racing career." It was he who developed the familiar stock selling routine which has cost the American public billions of dollars and which was copied by nearly every swindler in the business.

Late in 1935 Attorney General Bennett of New York caused the indictment of more than two hundred firms and individuals who were in the racing tipster racket. That action put a temporary stop to their depredations in New York, but an endless supply of "sucker money" is bringing them back.

The system used by a majority of these "services" is simplicity itself. The names of different horses in the same race are sent to the different individuals who have responded to their advertisements. In their advertisements the next day they brazenly announce the name of the winner of the race as their "tip" but they do *not* state that the name of the horse was sent to only a very few of the people who paid for their "service." The winners, of course, are back the next day for another "sure thing" and many of the losers will respond later to other advertisements.

An unusual circumstance is the fact

"I am glad to endorse the program of *Detective Fiction Weekly* which will bring to its readers the truth about rackets and racketeers. No man can be swindled if he knows in advance what the swindler is going to do—and nobody *wants* to be swindled."—Edward L. Greene, General Manager of the National Better Business Bureau.

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that many of these firms use the mails very freely in their operations. Uncle Sam generally has a very unpleasant habit of prosecuting those who use his mails in a scheme to defraud, and Post Office Inspectors in the Fraud Division are very expert in developing evidence. But the tipsters cash postal money orders and get thousands of dollars through the mails seemingly without much interference.

SOMEBODY once said, "A wise man learns from the experience of others; a fool from his own." So let me quote from Mr. Garrison:

"One of the catch phrases is to guarantee four winners out of six or give the next six *free*. They never offer to refund what you paid. This simply means that if you lose on the first six horses they will give you a chance to lose on the second six horses without any extra charge.

"No doubt many readers have purchased a 'tip sheet' of one sort or another; perhaps some of them have even won on the selections given. However, on the average, you will find that these sheets give from twenty to two hundred and fifty horses and if you play all of them you have no money left. Even the 'long shots' will not offset the long string of losers.

"Another branch of the game is the 'bet for me.' Here the crook offers the name of a horse if you will bet a certain amount for him. This looks like an honest proposition because he *can't* win unless you win. The joker is that he has distributed the names of practically every horse in the race to different individuals. In other words, he can't lose, but you can."

Another expert, who has been through the mill, offers the following five suggestions as tests of the sincerity of those who want to sell you "sure thing" information.

1. Ask the tout who offers fabulous information why, if the winners are so sure, the amount spent in getting others to bet is not wagered on the horse that "guarantees" such tremendous profit.

2. Ask the tout who makes the propositions if he will put in the hands of a reliable third party, the fee asked, plus the amount the "client" is asked to bet, the fee and the bet to be returned to the client if the horse loses.

3. Ask the tout who promises to name a horse scheduled to be a given "good thing" on a given date, to name that horse forty-eight hours before the race—twenty-four hours before the entries for that particular race are printed the daily newspapers.

4. Challenge the tout who asks a fee for service over a period of several days to make affidavit, with a notary of *your* selection, the names of his selections before the races are run.

5. Ask the tout offering you service to submit a file, under oath, of his "releases" over a period of a week, giving the name and address of the telegraph office from which he sent his releases, and written permission for you to examine telegrams sent out by him from that office on that day.

Honest purveyors of racing tips will not, and should not, object to any of these five provisions, but it is needless for me to add that none of them will agree to such a test. In some instances it is obviously impossible for them to comply; they don't know the names of the "sure things" they advertise, until the names of the entries are published in the newspapers the day before the race. "Don't play tips."

Next Week—Skip Tracers

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Solving Cipher Secrets

A cipher is secret writing. The way to solve ciphers is to experiment with substitute letters until real words begin to appear. In solving, notice the frequency of certain letters. For instance, the letters e, t, a, o, n, i, are the most used in our language. So if the puzzle maker has used X to represent e, X will probably appear very frequently. Combinations of letters will also give you clues. Thus, the affixes -ing, -ion, -ally are frequent. Read the helpful hints at the beginning of this department each week. The first cryptogram each week is the easiest.

M. E. OHAVER
"Sunyam"

AGAIN we congratulate PRIMROSE, John Q. Boyer, 2034 N. Fulton Ave., Baltimore! This time he has won *international* fame for his uncanny ability in solving ciphers! On July 16, in the "Believe It Or Not" contest recently conducted by *The Baltimore News-Post* and the Hippodrome Theatre, Primrose was personally picked by Robert L. Ripley as first-prize winner! Here is Ripley's letter written from his New York office:

DEAR MR. BOYER:

I am sure that your unique mentality is unexcelled and never will be equaled. I wish to personally congratulate you, and to say that your most interesting achievement will soon be depicted in my "Believe-It-Or-Not" drawings.

Signed,
BELIEVE IT OR NOT,
RIPLEY.

This award is in recognition of Primrose's having solved "more than 5,000 cryptograms, puzzles, and other 'magic enigma' without a single failure." A large part of the phenomenal record was accumulated in this department. Primrose's total solutions, submitted to "Solving Cipher Secrets," stood at 2,279 at the end of June, 1936. And he has solved every cryptogram published in this department since the beginning, without a single break! Primrose richly merits the Ripley tribute. And the honor is his as well, for carrying the torch of cryptography to this unprecedented height.

Your solution of last week's Inner Circle cipher, No. 246 by Jack IV, could well have been based on a comparison of ELLHDEUO and LDHUO, the former containing all the symbols of the latter. With the doubled symbol L reacting as a consonant, and symbol H (following the LL) probably *l* or *r*, *approach* would suggest itself for ELLHDEUO, at once unlocking LDHUO as *porch*. Other entries were -S (*-y*), -PA (*-es*), etc.

Leroy W. Kelly starts off this week's brain teasers with an excellent division puzzle. The key is a 10-letter word, numbered from *0* to *9*. *Zero* may be found by inspection; etc. Compare AKT, KT, and AKYTT in Ciphermit's cryptogram. Follow these words with ATB, RB, RO, KRO, and OD, thus unlocking the first two starred groups. El Diabolo provides TN and NDTU for initial entry to his message. Next get GAF and ONGFD, checking with GDFF. And so to *RTXGA *OUFDKLOS; etc.

Mrs. B. Pirosh offers the distinctively patterned XPZXPEPXX for identification in her contribution. Guess the ending -EPXX and you will have every letter in the word but one. In Susy Pumphandle's construction, -'Y and YVDVD will give you some leverage for a start. A solution of Don Ricardo's Inner Circle cipher and the answers to all of this week's puzzles will be given next week. Asterisks in cryptograms indicate capitalization.

No. 247—Cryptic Division. By Leroy W. Kelly.

```
ENI)SUITP(MUE
  CTC
 ---
  TST
  TAN
 ---
  MAP
  MUM
 ---
   NT
```


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No. 248—Two Months Short. By Ciphermit.

*XYTORSTBA *YDDOTUTVA NLZ GT YTTVTEATS, GFA KT PDB'A OTYUT TRHKA QFVV ZTLYO. AKT BTP RBLFHFYLV SLAT RO RB *MLBFLYZ, OD KRO XYTOTBA ATYN RO AKYTT ZTLYO, ATB NDBAKO VDBH.

No. 249—Beneficial Bark. By El Diabolo.

VXORRKO, EDTBXLFB NDTU GAF *RTXGA *OUFDKLOS VXORRKO GDFF, HOR SOUFB ONGFD GAF *RXDKSOU SFPDT, *VXORRK, HAT BKRLTZFDFB GAF UFBKLKSOY VXOYKGKFR TN GAF BDXP.

No. 250—Funny Blunders. By Mrs. B. Pirosh.

TUAPZ LFDLPF GEPOX, GDNPRV RPBPGBUAPX UZ KUGBUDZ KHYEPX RPZXPEV KDEEDO XPZXPEPXX BFHUEX, GDZXUXBPZBEV DAPFEDDSUZT YPXB YPBX.

No. 251—Getting the Works. By Susy. Pumphandle.

YHUTL RAN YVDVD VAZLY GULPF ZTEH UVOTL PENNOT'Y GULPF-NEPSOL. NAPSNEPSOL PUKXFL; TOPOABOY LFATLD RUDY. LAPSOT TOLTAOBOR!

No. 252—A Footlight Hit. By Don Ricardo.

VDPBVXL XZSMKP SPXBZ, PFVXPLKDM USPVBVY PZSDKVE, ONPFSKEY YKPGFT PFSAXZSA. PLVZFKYL YANPXSXBZY BRHNPX, PFSEBZ, PLVPG PSRRSMN. ASDKPGT EKEKP, YXZKPGND, PNONY AZBYPNDKVE.

LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

241—Key: 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9
M Y J O D P H U R S

242—A canner, remarkably canny,
One morning remarked to his granny,
"A canner can can
Anything that he can,
But a canner can't can a can, can he?"

243—Alexandre Eiffel, French engineer, built the famous Eiffel Tower, in the Champs de Mars, Paris, France, in twenty-six months.

244—Using mnemonics, police make amnesia victim talk. Murder confessed. Case tried. Verdict, "Guilty!" Penalty, electrocution. Widow collects insurance money; marries juror.

245—Languid, alligator-infested stream flowed sluggishly along. Near waterside, monster seized native woman. Husband attempted rescue. Double funeral next day.

246—Knavish juveniles approach piebald bungalow. Sight juicy rhubarb pie upon porch. Inmate, dormant aloft. Imps pilfer pastry. Scram next.

Readers sending us one or more answers to puzzles Nos. 247-52 will be duly credited in our *Cipher Solvers' Club* for October. Address: M. E. Ohaver, DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY, 280 Broadway, New York, N. Y.

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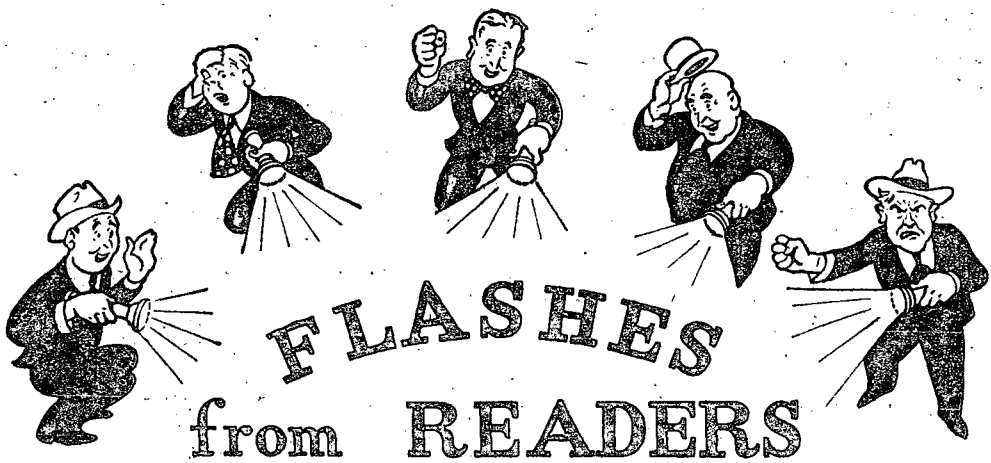

FLASHES from READERS

A NUMBER of readers have written at various times that they have delayed too long before purchasing a copy of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY on the newsstands. Usually, when this happens, they are not able to procure a copy readily, and as a result, miss a week's reading. This is especially exasperating when one is in the middle of a fine serial.

Max Brand's latest novel, "Seven Faces," begins in this issue. We on the editorial staff believe that it is probably the most gripping, intriguing story Mr. Brand has ever written about those quarrelsome, lovable detectives, *Angus Campbell* and *Patrick O'Rourke*.

In order that readers miss none of this great story, we respectfully suggest that they request their newsdealers to hold the next five issues of the magazine for them. Any dealer will be glad to receive such an order, and no DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY reader will risk missing a copy.

Cryptography as a possible career.

DEAR EDITOR:

Chi Valor's recent letter reminds me that I have been wanting for some time to write you in the same connection. Solving cipher secrets is getting to be so engrossing that it takes up almost all my leisure—except for the periods which I simply must devote to physical exercise.

I've got another idea about ciphers, too. I saw only a couple of weeks ago a cinema concerning the activities of code experts in war times. And I think that when and if the next war comes—if Providence be so unkind—there will be a great demand for experienced cryptographers, especially those who are able to function in more than a single language.

Fraternally,
NOSEIMAJ,
Winnipeg, Ont.

A gentleman who regrets three misspent years!

DEAR SIR:

If it were possible for a man to kick himself effectively, that's how I would be spending about ten hours a day right now.

Here's the problem: for about three years now, my buddy, who is a saxophonist in a band, has been telling me what a swell magazine you folks are putting out.

He raved so much about it that I thought it was just another of his nutty pet ideas—like the doggoned saxophone!—and consequently, I just let him spout without paying much attention to what he was saying.

A couple of hundred times, more or less, Eddie has said: "You ought to bust down and read such-and-such a story in this week's issue of DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY."

And exactly the same number of times, I would snort into the sporting pages and give him the bird.

But the other day, when Eddie had gone off to practice with the rest of the gang, I was home wasting a Saturday afternoon. I could have gone down and shot a couple of tables of pool. I

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ould have done a number of things. Instead, icked up the latest copy of DFW, the one with beginning of Fred MacIsaac's "Dead Men l Tales," and I'll be a monkey's uncle if I n't still reading to beat the band when Eddie e back from his practicing. And believe me, Editor, the razzberries he gave me would taken the temper out of steel.

ell, I'm a member of the gang now. I'm FW fan until Tophet freezes over. In spite he fact that I think I'm going to have to ve out because of the constant ribbing I'm tting from Eddie. "Three years!" he jibes. Three years I've been telling you so, you numskull!"

Sincerely yours,
LAWRENCE O'SHEA,
Chicago, Illinois.

Here's a chap ready to fight all comers!

EAR SIR:

I notice, a few issues back, that some of the boys and girls have been bickering about serials vs. short stories. Here's one vote for keeping he magazine just as it is now. As I see it, the erial readers get a dime's worth of serials, and ore. And the short story addicts *vice versa*. ut the chap who likes both serials and shorts—ke yours truly—really ought to pay a couple of mes. Only please don't take my suggestion too iously!

DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY is the best magae money can buy, and I'm ready to fight any n who wants to argue about it.

Truly,
GUS WERTHEIMER,
Toledo, Ohio.

No plans have been made yet. Perhaps you'd better file your copies.

EDITOR:

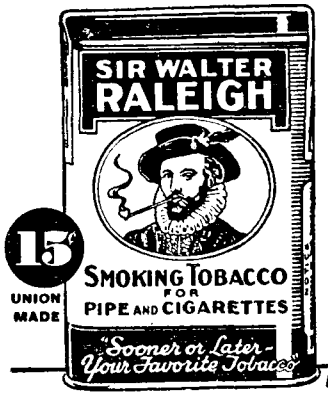
think that the CRIME LABORATORY feawhich you are now publishing is one of the st things you have ever offered the public. is material is obviously authoritative and emitly practical and helpful. I wonder if the erial has already been included in book form, if so, where I may obtain a copy of it.

Or if plans for the book have not yet been mulated, do you think that my idea has any lue? I maintain that several dozen CRIME ABORATORY features bound in one volume ould make a fine reference work for the layman ho is interested—as all laymen should be—in the orkings of our various police forces.

Truly,
EDWIN GRANT,
Birmingham, Ala.

TWO PUFFS from that soggy pipe full of firewater tobacco and another redskin bit the dust. We tell travelers as well as stay-at-homes that the true pipe of peace should be regularly cleaned, and packed with nothing but inoffensive Sir Walter Raleigh Smoking Tobacco. It's a secret blend of definitely milder Kentucky Burley leaf. Burns slow, pacifies the tenderest tongue and spreads a most delightful and winning fragrance. We're so blamed proud of Sir Walter Raleigh we wrap it in heavy gold foil for extra freshness. Ever treated yourself to a tin? Only 15¢.

SWITCH TO THE BRAND OF GRAND AROMA



FREE booklet tells how to make your old pipe taste better, sweeter; how to break in a new pipe. Write for copy today. Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corporation, Louisville, Kentucky. Dept. MS-610

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COMING NEXT WEEK!

Prison Bait

A Smashing New Novelette

By LESLIE T. WHITE

COLT WILLIAMS had never tangled with the Law—until that screaming girl accused him of robbing her. Then, in the line-up, a half dozen others swore that he was a desperate criminal. This is a stirring account of what may happen to any innocent man when the warlords of the Underworld need a fall guy!

●

The Shadow of the Chair

A Dramatic Long Novelette

By PAUL ERNST

PRIVATE DETECTIVE BALLARD had six hours to save his friend from the chair. In that fleeting time, he had to follow a months-old murder trail, battle the indifference of the self-satisfied police, and drag the real killer from the protection of a powerful outlaw syndicate!

●

Stories by

EDGAR FRANKLIN -:- ROBERT SNEDDON
MAX BRAND -:- JOHN KOBLER
and others

Plus the usual DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY features by FRANK WRENTMORE, "G-2," L. U. REAVIS and M. E. OHAVER.

ALL IN THE OCTOBER 24 ISSUE!

DETECTIVE FICTION WEEKLY

LAW STUDY AT HOME
Legally trained men win high positions and big success in business and public life. Be independent. Greater opportunities now than ever before. Big corporations are headed by men with legal training. Earn
$3,000 to $10,000 Annually
We guide you step by step. You can train at home during spare time. Degree of LL. B. conferred. Successful graduates in every section of the United States. We furnish all text material, including fourteen-volume Law Library. Low cost, easy terms. Get our valuable 64-page "Law Training for Leadership" and "Evidence" books FREE. Send for them NOW.
LaSalle Extension University, Dept. 1058-L, Chicago

PILES DON'T BE CUT
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for pile suffering. If you have piles in any form write for a FREE sample of Page's Pile Tablets and you will bless the day that you read this. Write today. F. R. Page Co., 404-B2 Page Bldg., Marshall, Mich.

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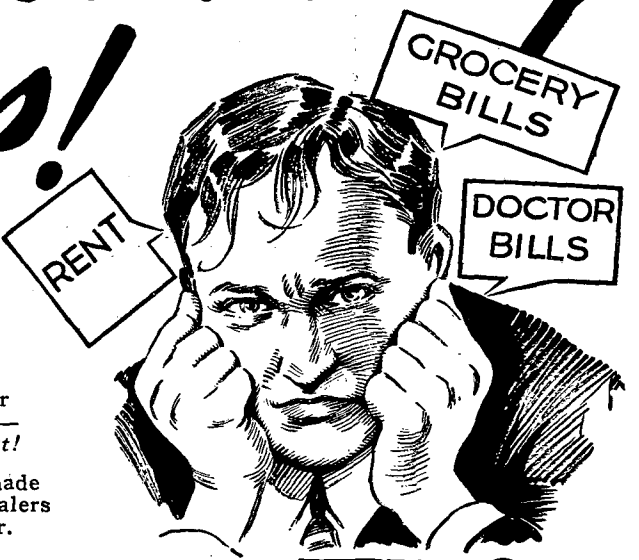
Stop Your Money Worries!



agging, comforts vanishing, funds g, the fingers of want reaching r what little is left—*what a torture* jobs are hard to get and a family must pt alive!

ould you change the picture? Then look at e cheering prospect opened up by my gener- s offer to help you set up a respectable and ofitable business of your own—finance your sperous growing business on my money— *thout you risking a penny of your money to start!*

here's no catch in this. It's an honest offer, made a responsible manufacturer whose Route Dealers ade *over one million dollars in profits* last year.

I'll Give You This New Chance

a manufacturer, nationally known, with a -dollar plant. I need more Dealers at once k in their own home territories. I offer this money-making chance to earnest men and who will set up Routes in familiar neigh- ds. When you become a Dealer, you are Independent Merchant. Other Dealers king up to $60 and more in one week. You uality products in everyday use by all the a brand well-known the country over, but old in stores. You take orders at your hap nce; light work; no experience neces- bulky equipment to carry; no store com- DEAR *You begin earning at once—your first* I *waiting, no delay!* Send for full de- ture BSOLUTELY FREE.

fine delicious sense of security when you have Th mily provided for, money in hand and your ner osy. Not so much to ask, perhaps, but all mai n denied.

and

It may seem "too good to be true" when I say my proposition has brought *prosperity* to many Dealers who work with me, but it is a *fact*. The chance I give those who coöperate and who pursue their opportunity faithfully, makes the way clear for *big cash returns for honest effort!*

You work for yourself. You have your own business, are your own boss, work as you like. Results are up to you.

It is into this prosperous family I invite the willing and ambitious. You, too, will have the most glorious opportunity of your life to make good. Find out more about my proposition. Lose no time. Mail the coupon right now—TODAY! All the facts are Free!

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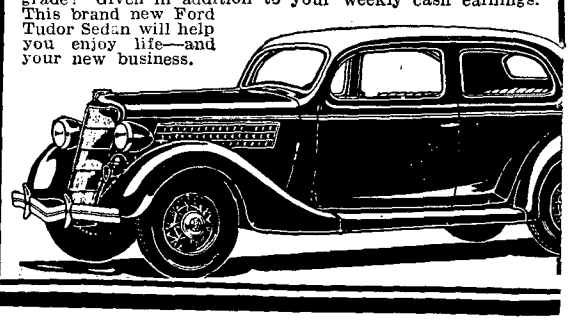
Use a car like this

My free gift to Dealers as a bonus for making the grade! Given in addition to your weekly cash earnings. This brand new Ford Tudor Sedan will help you enjoy life—and your new business.



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Smoke to Your Throat's Content

Many smokers have chosen Lucky Strikes simply because they *taste better.* Then as the days go by they sense that Luckies make *smoother going* for their throats—that they are a Light Smoke. Certain acids and other heavy, harsh irritants naturally present in all tobacco are removed by the famous process—"It's Toasted." *Only* Luckies are "Toasted." Smoke Luckies to your throat's content.

Copyright, 1936, The American Tobacco Co.

Luckies—a light smoke

OF RICH, RIPE-BODIED TOBACCO — "IT'S TOASTED"

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